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ABSTRACT

A "gatekeeper" is an individual within a communication system who, through a process of selection, restricts the flow of information to the receivers. To investigate certain demographic characteristics and opinions which influence county supervisors (gatekeepers) in the selection of publications for dissemination to vocational agriculture teachers, numerous publications were mailed to Maryland county supervisors. The extent of dissemination of these publications was checked through the vocational agriculture teachers, who also provided opinions regarding what types of publications they needed. Further, the supervisors were interviewed by telephone to obtain the demographic data and their opinions regarding several factors of the publications. Some conclusions reached as result of the study were: (1) Supervisors were aware of teacher needs but did not disseminate publications to meet these needs, and (2) Supervisors base their opinions of publications in part on the general content of publications. (Author/JS)

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ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Gatekeepers in Vocational Education

Boyd F. Robinson, Jr., Master of Science, 1971

Thesis directed by: Dr. Clifford L. Nelson
Associate Professor
Department of Agricultural and
Extension Education

The study proposed to investigate some of the factors associated with selection of publications by Maryland county supervisors of vocational agricultural teachers.

The county supervisors were mailed numerous publications and the extent of their dissemination of those publications was checked through the vocational agriculture teachers who also provided their opinions regarding what types of publications they needed. The supervisors were interviewed by telephone to obtain demographic data and their opinions regarding several factors of the publications.

A Spearman correlation coefficient of .904 between the supervisors' and vocational agriculture teachers' ranking of the general content of publications was significant at the .01 level. A negative correlation of -.179 between the supervisors' ranking and extent of dissemination of publications was not significant. The supervisors' ranking of the relative importance of publications and their ranking of the general content of publications yielded a correlation coefficient of .671 which was significant at the .05 level.

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Coefficients of concordance for the supervisors' opinions of several factors of publications were significant beyond the .005 level and ranged from .189 to .569.

It was concluded that supervisors were aware of teacher needs but did not disseminate publications to meet those needs. It was also concluded that supervisors base their opinions of publications in part on the general content of publications. Another conclusion was that supervisors tend to agree on and use the same criteria for their opinions regarding the personal source, the organizational source, and the general content of publications.

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GATEKEEPERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

by
Boyd Fillmore Robinson, Jr.

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
1971

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Secondary vocational education has held a unique position in the educational system of this country since the formal inception of vocational education shortly after the turn of the century. This unique position stemmed from federal legislation which established and sought to maintain local programs of vocational education in such areas as agriculture, home economics, trades and industry, and distributive occupations.[1] No such parallel in regard to the establishment and maintenance of local programs which utilized large amounts of federal funds existed for other facets of secondary education prior to the 1960's. While other areas of education received stimuli for progress from state and local levels, vocational education must credit the federal establishment for the impetus for growth.[2] Federal funding, in essence, allowed for the establishment of a vocational hierarchy at federal, state, and local levels. It is within this background that the situation for this study has evolved.

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[1]Mayor D. Mobley and Melvin L. Barlow, "Impact of Federal Legislation and Policies upon Vocational Education," Vocational Education, The Sixty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 187.

[2]Ibid., p. 199.

In order to establish local programs of vocational education, a system of federal, state, and local agencies evolved to provide assistance in this task. Thus the administration and supervision of vocational education arose through a centrally co-ordinated approach. Though the impetus for the establishment of local vocational programs occurred through federal legislation, the broad provisions of the several vocational acts left policy decisions to state and local agencies.[3]

One segment of vocational education to benefit from federal funding is the program in vocational agriculture. An important factor in the quality of that program is the professional competence of vocational agriculture teachers. A method of stimulating improvement of professional competence involves the dissemination of information regarding available resources, new and changing programs and techniques, curriculum development, career opportunities, technical agriculture, research findings, and other vocationally related material.

The hierarchy of state and local administration and supervision has further developed as a channel of communication to local vocational agriculture teachers from central sources such as the United States Office of Education, the United States Department of Agriculture, the American

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[3]Herbert M. Hamlin, "Local, Regional, and State Policies and Policy-making," Vocational Education, The Sixty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 207-209.

Vocational Association, the Center for Research and Leadership Development in Vocational and Technical Education, the National FFA Center, Agricultural Experiment Stations, the Cooperative Extension Service, Colleges of Agriculture and their many departments, and State Divisions of Vocational and Technical Education.

In geographic areas of intense population, a system of county and school district supervision for vocational education was developed to further facilitate the establishment and maintenance of local vocational programs. County supervisors of vocational agricultural programs in Maryland are a product of this development. The dissemination of information to local vocational agriculture teachers has occurred in part through the efforts of county supervisors who channel relevant publications to those teachers. A problem faced by the supervisor is the necessity to select publications which in his estimation adequately meet the needs of vocational agriculture teachers. It is in this selection capacity that a vocational supervisor functions as a "gatekeeper."[4]

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study centers on an investigation of some of the factors associated with the selection of relevant publications by county vocational supervisors of

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[4]David Manning White, "The 'Gatekeeper': A Case Study in the Selection of News," Journalism Quarterly, 27, 383:390, Fall, 1950.

agricultural programs in Maryland for dissemination to vocational agriculture teachers within the supervisors' respective county. There is no assurance that the publications which local vocational agriculture teachers receive from their supervisors actually meet their needs. It is within this context that the criteria for selecting publications for dissemination is of importance.

Definitions

1. Gatekeeper: An individual within a communication system who, through a process of selection, restricts the flow of information to the receivers.

2. Non-purposive communicator: An individual within a communication system who transmits a message with no intent to influence the receiver.

3. Purposive communicator: An individual within a communication system who transmits a message with intent to influence the receiver.

Assumptions

The following assumptions apply to this study:

1. All county supervisors of vocational agricultural programs in Maryland disseminate publications to Maryland vocational agriculture teachers within their respective counties.

2. County supervisors of vocational agricultural programs in Maryland act as "gatekeepers" in disseminating publications to Maryland vocational agriculture teachers.

3. The personal sources of the study functioned as purposive communicators.

4. County supervisors of vocational agricultural programs functioned as non-purposive communicators.

5. Vocational agriculture teachers' ranking of the general content of a set of publications adequately reflects his needs for general types of publications.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the research studies concerning "gatekeepers" have occurred in the area of mass communications research. There are some literature in other areas which relate to the gatekeeper concept. As such this chapter is divided into two areas of concern.

Research in Mass Communications

In a review of communication research in the United States, Wilbur Schramm called attention to the "founding fathers" of communication research. One of these was Kurt Lewin, an eminent Gestalt psychologist who immigrated from Vienna to this country in the early 1930's.[1] Lewin made several contributions to the field of communications, among which was the identification of the "gatekeeper" in various channels of group life. In a study during World War II on food channels, Lewin identified the housewife as a "gatekeeper" in the selection of food for the family. In an article for Human Relations shortly before his death, he stated:

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[1]Wilbur Schramm (ed.), The Science of Human Communication (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1963), p. 3.

> . . . that a certain area within a channel may function as a "gate"; the constellation of the forces before and after the gate region is decisively different in such a way that the passing or not passing of the unit through the whole channel depends to a high degree upon what happens in the gate region. This holds not only for food channels but also for the traveling of a news item through certain communications channels in a group, for movement of goods, and the social locomotion of individuals in many organizations.[2]

He further indicated that gates are governed by impartial rules or "gatekeepers," and that an understanding of the gate functions entailed an understanding of which factors determined the decisions of the "gatekeeper"; also, that changing this social process involves influencing or replacing the gatekeeper. In order to influence or replace the gatekeeper, he proposed that "the first diagnostic task in such cases is that of finding the actual gatekeepers."[3] With this, Kurt Lewin set the stage for subsequent research in the field of mass communications.

In the late 1940's, David Manning White applied Lewin's "gatekeeper" phenomenon to mass communications in a now classic study of a telegraph wire editor for a daily newspaper in a non-metropolitan midwest city.[4] In that study, White, according to Bass, failed to retain all aspects of the "Lewin gatekeeper" by deleting the phrase "in a group"

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[2]Kurt Lewin, "Frontiers in Group Dynamics, II, Channels of Group Life: Social Planning and Action Research," Human Relations, 161:1, No. 2, 1947, p. 145.

[3]Ibid.

[4]White, op. cit., pp. 383-390.

from Lewin's (previously cited) statement concerning application of the gatekeeper concept to other communication channels. This, Bass maintained, changed a group dynamics concept from the small group setting. In addition, Bass indicated that White conducted no diagnostic search to locate a "gatekeeper"; rather, White announced that he had found a "gatekeeper" to study.[5] In spite of these two "limitations," White's initial study has had a great impact on communications research as evidenced by its numerous citations in communications literature and subsequent follow-up studies. White's purpose in that original study was to:[6]

> . . . determine some preliminary ideas as to why this particular wire editor selected or rejected the news stories filed by the three press associations (and transmitted by the "gatekeeper" above him in Chicago) and thereby gain some diagnostic notions about the general role of the "gatekeeper" in the areas of mass communications.

White asked his co-operating "gatekeeper," "Mr. Gates" to save rejected wire copy for one week and to indicate his reasons for rejection.[7] Though White's findings in this study were very subjective and general, the study established the foundation for other more meaningful studies.

Another research of major importance on "gatekeepers" was conducted by Walter Gieber and reported in the Journalism

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[5]Abraham Z. Bass, "Refining the 'Gatekeeper' Concept: A UN Radio Case Study," Journalism Quarterly, 46:69-70, Spring, 1969.

[6]White, op. cit., p. 384.

[7]Ibid., p. 385.

Quarterly in the fall of 1956. Gieber's study of sixteen telegraph editors in Wisconsin followed essentially the same methodology used by White. He indicated in his findings that "the telegraph editor described in this study is caught in a straight jacket of mechanical details." He further stipulated that:[8]

> As a "gatekeeper" in the channel of telegraph news, the wire editor appears to be passive. His news values are elementary and broadly structured. He operates within the temporal orientation of a publishing cycle.

Gieber also pointed out that the press association was the real selector of news and that the daily content of the newspaper was "due to the nature of the channels of press association news and the 'open gateway' of the newspaper."[9]

Another "gatekeeper" study significant to this study was a replication of White's original study by Paul B. Snider in 1966. For that study he used the original "Mr. Gates" as his "gatekeeper" approximating the methodology used by White. Snider's purpose was to determine if 17 years had changed "Mr. Gates" attitude toward news. His findings varied somewhat from White's but again were concerned with the subjective. In conclusion he stated that:[10]

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[8]Walter Gieber, "Across the Desk: A Study of 16 Telegraph Editors," Journalism Quarterly, 33:432, Fall, 1956.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Paul B. Snider, "'Mr. Gates' Revisited: A 1966 Version of the 1949 Case Study," Journalism Quarterly, 44:419-427.

> The intervening years and the effect of these years on Mr. Gates and upon his newspaper, plus the differences between the interviewers, may have indicated or at least confirmed some trends in today's newspapers.

An example of these trends is that "Mr. Gates" now has only one wire service whereas in the first study he had three.

Of further interest is a study by Gieber and Johnson concerning newsmen in relationship to sources of news. In that study of source-reporter relationships, three hypothetical models of communication were constructed by eliminating the reader (B) from the Westley-Maclean model of communication. City hall "beat" reporters in a California suburban city, referred to as "Factoria," and their sources of news (the city councilmen, the city manager, and the city planning director) were interviewed and observed to determine

> . . . self-perception of communications role, perception of the role of the other, attitudes toward the press as a source of governmental information, and an evaluation of source-reporter relationship.

In their conclusions these authors stated that in regard to the two groups:[11]

> Both claim a primary role of communicating information to the public, a vaguely perceived amalgam of voters and readers. The sources believe that reporters should be "open" gatekeepers passing unmediated information into the newspapers. The reporters, believing the sources should be "open door" informants, reserve the mandate to decide how to mediate the information.

The authors further concluded that, "The real difference between these two groups are the consequences of the

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[11]Walter Gieber and Walter Johnson, "The City Hall 'Beat': A Study of Reporter and Source Roles," Journalism Quarterly, 38:289-297, Summer, 1961.

communication acts--the difference in 'assimilation' and 'distribution.'"[12]

In other studies regarding source and its effect on message credibility, Atwood found that source credibility affects agreement with the message.[13] Carter, in an article regarding "gatekeepers" relationship to sources of news, suggested seven research variables by which the source-gatekeeper relationship could be approached for study. These research variables were an outgrowth of several studies conducted by the author.[14] In another study involving source credibility, Hoveland and Weiss, using a "trustworthy" and an "untrustworthy" source on two groups of a sample, found no difference in retention of factual information, but noted that changes in opinion were significantly related to the "trustworthiness" of the source used in the communication.[15] In still another study regarding source, Tichenor, Olien, and Donohue, using a non-purposive communicator (gatekeeper news editor) and a group of purposive communicators (county extension agents) to determine the ability of the agent to

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[12]Ibid., p. 297.

[13]L. Erwin Atwood, "The Effects of Incongruity Between Source and Message Credibility," Journalism Quarterly, 43:90, Spring, 1966, p. 90.

[14]Roy E. Carter, Jr., "Newspaper 'Gatekeepers' and the Sources of News," Public Opinion Quarterly, 22:133-144, Summer, 1958.

[15]Carl I. Hovland and Walter Weiss, "The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness," Experiments in Persuasion (eds.) Ralph L. Rosnov and Edward J. Robinson (New York: Academic Press, 1967), p. 21.

place news in a newspaper, found that:

> Agreement between agents' own judgments and editor judgment is more closely linked to success in message placement than is accuracy of agents' perceptions of editors' judgments.[16]

The preceeding studies regarding the "gatekeeper" and the source of communication represent, in part, the research that has been carried out in regard to the communicator within a communication channel. One other study concerning communicator characteristics is pertinent. Heckman, Knower, and Wagner in a Columbus, Ohio study to determine the characteristics of professional communicators found few significant differences between professional and non-professional communicators. Professional communicators in the experimental group were lawyers, teachers, clergymen, newspapermen, and radio and television announcers. A control group of engineers represented the non-professional communicators. In summary the authors stated that:[17]

> The professional communicator, as a person, may not be greatly different from the non-professional communicator. Or to put it another way, indicated by the findings, there may be so many differences among professional communicators as persons that the classification is meaningful only as a label for professional competence.

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[16]Philip J. Tichenor, Clarence N. Olien, and George A. Donohue, "Predicting a Source's Success in Placing News in the Media," Journalism Quarterly, 44:33-42, Spring, 1967.

[17]Dayton E. Heckman, Franklin H. Knower, and Paul H. Wagner, The Man Behind the Message: Personal Characteristics of Professional Communicators (Columbus: The Ohio State University, 1956), p. 113.

Other Literature

Havelock, in a comparative study of literature concerning the dissemination and utilization of knowledge, has summarized much of the research of interest to researchers in that area. In the opening summary, he states that:

> This report provides a framework for understanding the processes of innovation, dissemination, and knowledge utilization, and it reviews the relevant literature in education and other fields of practice within this framework.[18]

In regard to credibility, Havelock has stated that:

> One of the most important variables that determines whether or not a sender will be able to influence a receiver is the extent to which he is perceived as a reliable and believable source of information.[19]

In discussing knowledge linking roles, the author further indicated that the simplest role was that of the conveyer or carrier. The conveyer, according to Havelock, is ". . . one who takes knowledge from expert sources and passes it on to non-expert potential users."[20]

Rogers has discussed two other roles which are related to the gatekeeper role. According to Rogers, "opinion leaders are defined as those individuals from whom others seek advice and information."[21] It should be noted that the gatekeeper,

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[18]Ronald G. Havelock, Planning for Innovation Through Dissemination and Utilization of Knowledge (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1969), p. 4.

[19]Ibid., pp. 5-16.

[20]Ibid., pp. 7-3.

[21]Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. 208.

by definition, operates independent of whether he is sought for advice and information.

Rogers also defines the change agent as "a professional person who attempts to influence adoption decisions in a direction that he feels is desirable."[22] The gatekeeper differs from the change agent in that by role definition the gatekeeper does not attempt to influence the receivers in the channel.

The paucity of research concerning the communicator in a communications channel is quite evident. Research has reflected that little is really known about the communicator. With few exceptions, studies have been exploratory in nature and very limited in findings. As such, the need for further research in this area becomes apparent.

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[22]Ibid., p. 254.

Chapter III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The field of journalism and mass communications research provides a limited theoretical framework for certain aspects of this study. Other aspects are dependent on a rationale for their foundation. The theory and rationale seemingly break into three distinct categories, which are the communication channel, message characteristics, and communicator background. It is in regard to the first two categories that a limited theory or, perhaps more accurately, numerous theoretical constructs exist.

A Communications Research Model

Westley and Maclean provide insight in regard to the progress of communication theory, stating that:[1]

> Communications research and theory have blossomed from a variety of disciplinary sources in recent years. People probing the communications area have here focused on theoretical issues and there on "practical" concerns. Thus, one finds today a jungle of unrelated concepts and systems of concepts on the one hand and a mass of undigested, often sterile empirical data on the other.

These statements preceeded their presentation of a paradigm or model which they offer as a contribution toward a theory

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[1]Bruce H. Westley and Malcolm S. Maclean, Jr., "A Conceptual Model for Communications Research," Interpersonal Communication: Survey and Studies, ed. Dean C. Barnlund (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 45.

of communication. A description of the communication channel of this study will be made in light of their conceptual model for communication research which is presented in Figure 1 below:[2]

Westley-Mclean Conceptual Model
for Communications Research

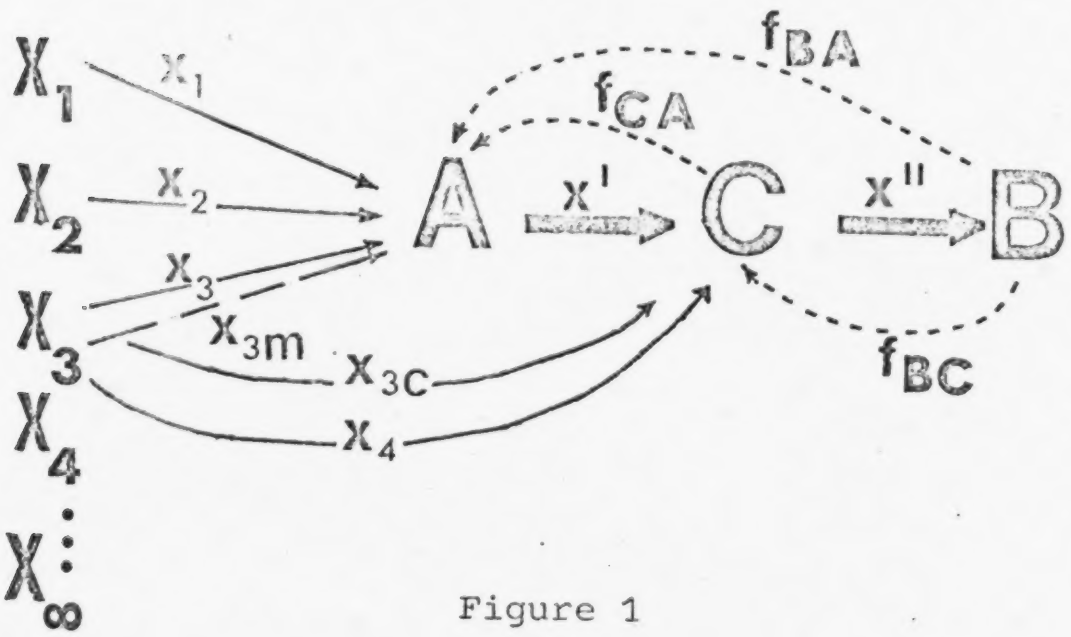

Figure 1

According to Westley and Mclean, X represents an object or event with characteristics which may be transmitted; $X_{1-\infty}$ represents a message; X_{3C} represents a message received directly by C as well as A; X_{3M} represents a message received by A in two forms; X_4 represents a message received by C directly. A represents a purposive communicator; B represents the receiver; C represents an agent (gatekeeper) who selects and transmits non-purposive information; X^1 represents a message modified or selected by A; X^{11} represents a message modified or selected by C; solid lines and dotted

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[2] Ibid., p. 49.

lines represent channels of communication; and FCA, FBA, and FBC represent feedback from receiver to one of the communicators.

One limitation of the Westley-Mclean model may be in the exclusion of the source of a message. An adapted model (Figure 2) includes the source of a message.

Westley-Mclean Conceptual Model for
Communications Research as
Adapted to Include Source

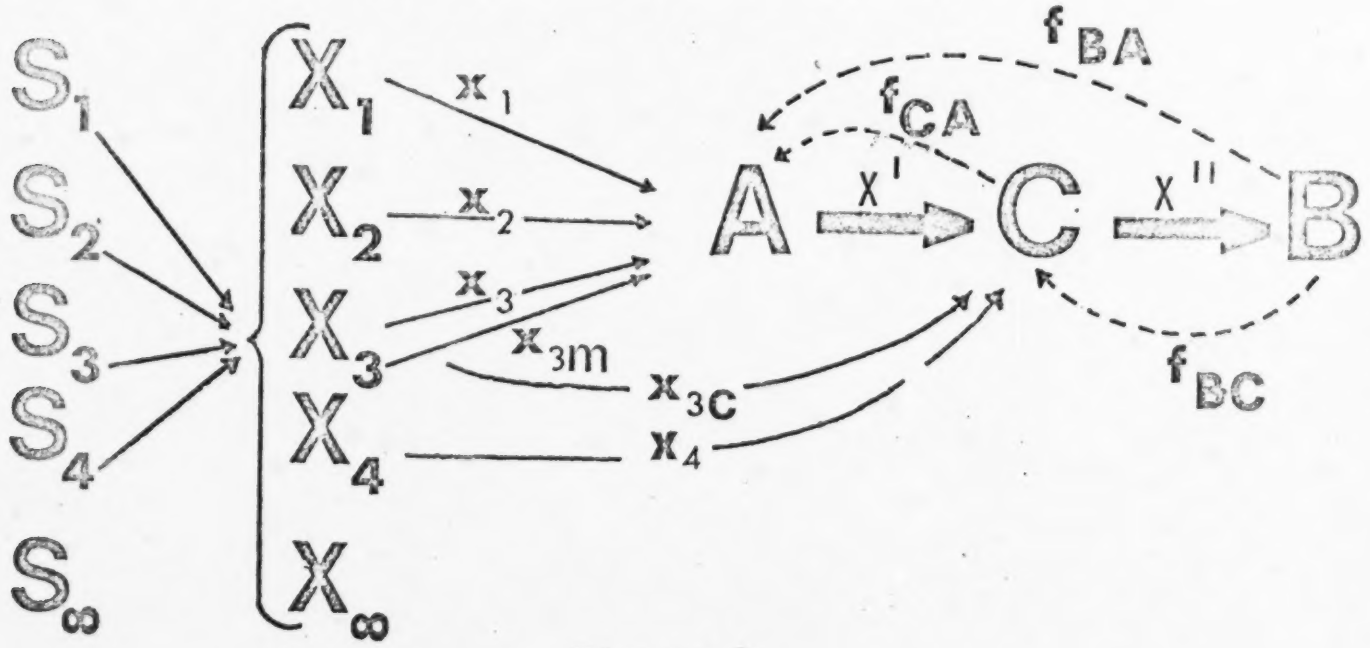

Figure 2

A further adaptation of the Westley-Mclean model (Figure 3) offers a method by which the "gatekeepers" of this study may be viewed in regard to their function within the existing channel of communication for vocational agricultural education in Maryland. This model separates the source of a message into two parts.

The communication channel begins with the accumulation of information, research, and ideas of significance to vocational agriculture by previously mentioned organizations

such as the United States Office of Education. In the adapted model these organizations are referred to as organizational sources and are designated by the symbol $S_{1-\omega}$.

The purposive communicator is also considered a type of source in the adapted model and is called a personal source designated by the symbol $A_{1-\omega}$. Message's in the adapted model are limited to vocationally oriented publications and are selected by the gatekeeper but not modified. Hence, only the message $X_{1-\omega}$ representing communication from $S_{1-\omega}$ is considered in the adapted model. X^1 and X^{11} represent messages (publications) selected by the purposive (A) and non-purposive (C) communicators respectively. Feedback has been deleted from the adapted model which is shown below in Figure 3.

Model for the Formal Communication Channel in Maryland Vocational Education as Adapted from the Westley-Mclean Conceptual Model for Communications Research

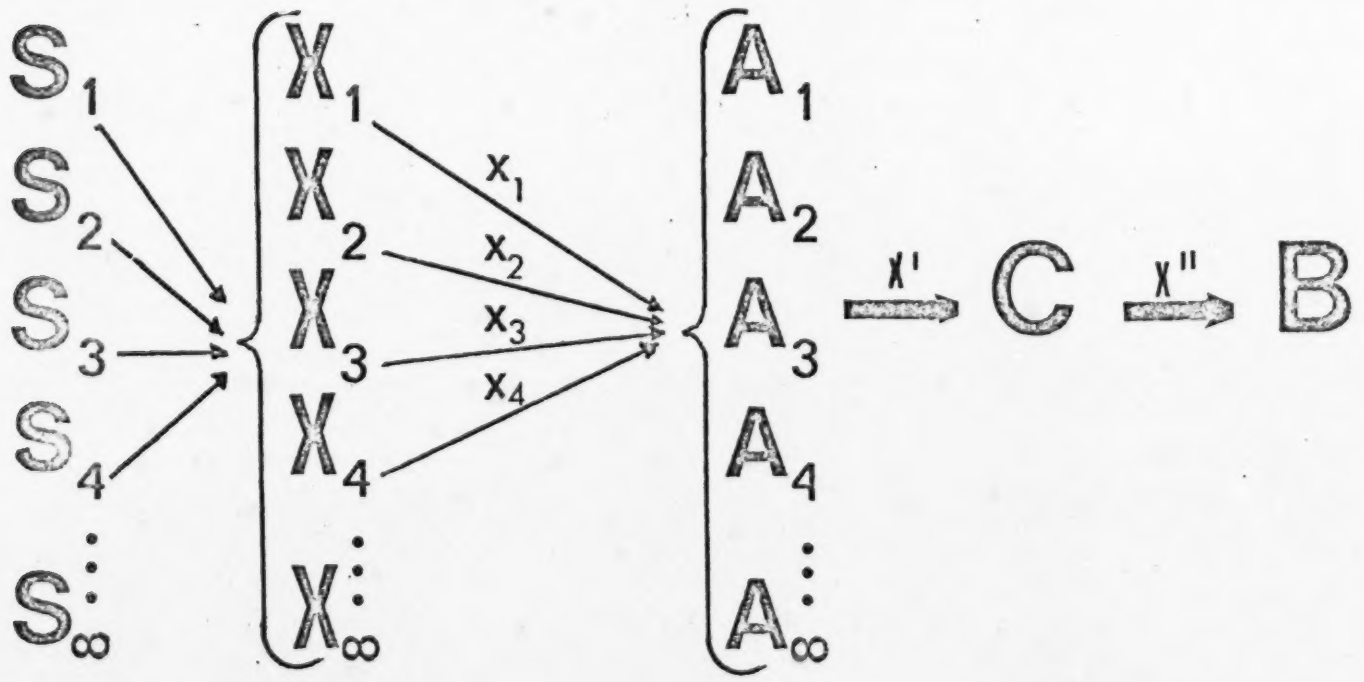

Figure 3

Seemingly, the Westley-Mclean model, as adapted adequately, reflects the communication channel to be studied. Even so, further description of the channel in light of the model should serve to facilitate a better understanding. As publications become available from the various organizational sources, personal sources functioning as purposive communicators, disseminate the publications to county vocational supervisors. In regard to the purposive and non-purposive communicator, Westley and Mclean have stated:

> . . . that it is in the 'role prescriptions', not in the actual performance, that the distinction is made between the purposive or 'advocacy' characteristics of the A role and the non-purposive or 'gatekeeper' characteristics of the C role.[3]

After receiving publications from the purposive communicator, the county supervisor then acts as a "gatekeeper" in the selection and subsequent dissemination of certain publications to vocational agriculture teachers. Though this represents only a "thumb-nail sketch" of the communication channel in question, it should be stated that this study will seek to examine the communicator rather than the communication channel.

Communicator Theory

It is hypothesized that message characteristics such as personal source, organizational source, and the general content of a publication will effect the selection of publications by the "gatekeeper." There has been a number of

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[3]Ibid., p. 50.

studies conducted in regard to source credibility. One such study by Atwood on the effects of incongruity between source and message credibility led the author to conclude that,

> When a high credibility source gives a low credibility message, source credibility declines but the reverse does not hold; source credibility also effects agreement with the message.[4]

In a study on communicator effectiveness, Zimbardo and others stated that "one of the most widely held generalizations in sccial psychology is that the effectiveness of a persuasive communication is increased if its source is 'credible.'"[5]

Rosnov and Robinson also indicated that,

> The consistent finding thus far is that the more persuasive communicator is the one whose expertise, experience, or social role establishes him as a credible source of the information presented.[6]

In another section of the same book those authors stated that,

> The potency of any persuasive appeal depends on the nature of its content, the quality of its presentation, the credibility of its source, recipients' perception of its intent, and a host of other factors.[7]

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[4]L. Erwin Atwood, "The Effects of Incongruity Between Source and Message Credibility," Journalism Quarterly, 43:90, Spring, 1966.

[5]Philip G. Zimbardo and Others, "Communicator Effectiveness in Producing Public Conformity and Private Attitude Change," Experiments in Persuasion, (eds.), Ralph L. Rosnov and Edward J. Robinson (New York: Academic Press, 1967), p. 29.

[6]Ralph L. Rosnov and Edward J. Robinson, "The Persuasive Negative Communicator," Experiments in Persuasion, (eds.), Ralph L. Rosnov and Edward J. Robinson (New York: Academic Press, 1967), p. 25.

[7]Ralph L. Rosnov and Edward J. Robinson, "Source," Experiments in Persuasion, (eds.), Ralph L. Rosnov and Edward J. Robinson (New York: Academic Press, 1967), p. 2.

It should also be noted that the term content in this study refers only to the general nature of a particular publication and should not be confused with the term content analysis. Bernard Berelson defines the latter terms as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication."[8] In this study content is limited to the identification of the general nature of a set of publications.

Rationale for other Factors of the Study

It is with regard to the effect of the content of publications, as well as the effect of the background of a supervisor on publication selection, that an adequate rationale must be constructed.

The best rationale for the effect of general content of a publication on selection by the gatekeeper would seemingly be based on previous research concerning the source. If the source of a message indeed has an effect on its acceptance, then it seems very logical that the content too would have an effect on the acceptance of the message.

The background of an individual would also seem to affect any decision he is likely to make. An individual who has been a former vocational agriculture teacher would appear to be better informed in regard to the needs of vocational

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[8]Bernard Berelson, "Content Analysis in Communication Research," Reader in Public Opinion and Communication, 2nd ed., (eds.), Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 263.

agriculture teachers. As such, it would seem that if he were in the position to disseminate publications to vocational agriculture teachers, he would be inclined to disseminate those publications which complement their needs. On the other hand, if one had no former experience as a vocational agriculture teacher, it would seem that he would not be as apt to be informed of their needs and consequently the publications he might disseminate would reflect this situation. In addition, it would appear that a county supervisor who was interested in providing for the needs of vocational agriculture teachers would tend to send all publications which might meet these needs. It would also appear that persons with a rural or farm background would be more inclined to have a high interest in the needs of vocational agriculture teachers. Furthermore, a person with a rural or farm background would seemingly be more aware of their need.

Need for the Study

Among the needs for this type of study is a need for an understanding of the "gatekeeper." Culbertson, in a review of needed research and development for mass communication research, stated that "very little is known of the key 'gate-keepers' in our present mass communication system." It may be inferred that little is known about the "gatekeeper" in general as most gatekeeper studies have occurred in mass communications research. Culbertson further stipulates a

need for an understanding of the ethics, values, and perceptions of this communicator.[9] David Manning White, who first applied the concept of a "gatekeeper" to journalism research, indicated the paucity of research in communicator analysis by pointing out that only twenty-six such studies were published in the Journalism Quarterly during the period from 1924 to 1963.[10]

Another specific need for this type of study lies in an increasing need for new programs and changes in existing programs for vocational education which has been brought about by vast increases in technology and the rapid social progress of this nation. These needs for vocational education demand that provisions be made for the individual needs of local vocational educators in carrying out new and improved programs in vocational education. In part, this may be accomplished by providing the type of information which will assist these educators in their goals. Mersel, Donohue, and Morris emphasized the need to provide information to local educators in a final report of a United States Office of Education sponsored study conducted by Informatics, Inc. They have stated that the "dissemination of research

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[9]Jack Culbertson, "Needed Research and Development in Mass Communication," A Seminar on Communications Research Findings and Their Implications for School-Community Relations Programs, ed., Leslie W. Kindred (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1965), pp. 220-221.

[10]David Manning White, "The Role of Journalism Education in Mass Communications Research," A Seminar on Communications Research Findings and Their Implications for School-Community Relations Program, ed., Leslie W. Kindred (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1965), pp. 32-33.

information to the local school districts will be one of the main problems that must be solved by the U. S. Office."[11]

It is within the context of the preceeding that another need for a gatekeeper study of this type becomes apparent. An understanding of what type and kind of material to develop hinges in part on a knowledge of what type and kind of material will flow through existing communication channels. In essence, what types of publications should be developed for assurance that gatekeepers in vocational education will disseminate these publications to local vocational educators? Hopefully, this study provides insight which may be used to improve communications to local vocational educators.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate some of the factors associated with the selection of publications by Maryland county supervisors of agricultural programs for dissemination to Maryland vocational agriculture teachers. The objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the county supervisor's rank of a set of publications to meet the needs of vocational agriculture teachers.

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[11]Jules Mersel, Joseph C. Donohue, and William A. Morris, Information Transfer in Educational Research, Final Report submitted to U. S. Office of Education (Sherman Oaks, California: Informatics, Inc., 1966) (Mimeographed), p. 7.2.

2. To determine the county supervisors' rank of various organizational sources of publications to meet the needs of vocational agriculture teachers.

3. To determine the county supervisors' rank of various personal sources of publications to meet the needs of vocational agriculture teachers.

4. To determine the county supervisors' rank of the general content of publications to meet the needs of vocational agriculture teachers.

5. To determine the vocational agriculture teachers' rank of the general content of publications to meet his own needs.

6. To determine if the general content of publications ranked by supervisors meet the needs of the vocational agriculture teacher as perceived by the teacher.

7. To determine if selected factors influence the county supervisors' selection of publications for dissemination.

Hypotheses

The selection of relevant publications for dissemination to local vocational agricultural teachers is an important function of the county supervisor of vocational agricultural programs. The central thesis of this study is that selected demographic characteristics and selected opinions of county supervisors are factors affecting the selection process. The following hypotheses were tested:

1. The extent of the county supervisors' dissemination of publications to vocational agriculture teachers is directly related to selected characteristics of the supervisor.

2. The opinions of county supervisors and vocational agriculture teachers regarding the general content of a set of publications are positively related.

3. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the relative importance of a set of publications are positively related to the extent of the supervisors' dissemination of those publications.

4. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, and the relative importance of a set of publications are positively related.

5. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the general content and the relative importance of a set of publications are positively related.

6. The opinions among county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, the general content, and the relative importance of a set of publications, as well as the extent of dissemination of those publications, are related.

7. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source and the organizational source of a set of publications are positively related when each supervisor disseminates the same quantity of each publication in the set.

8. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, the general

content, and the relative importance of a set of publications are related to selected characteristics of the supervisors.

Chapter IV

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The research procedures of this study were divided into three parts. The first was experimental in nature and involved the mailing of a set of publications to county supervisors to determine which publications were disseminated to vocational agriculture teachers.

The second portion of the study involved obtaining the cooperation of vocational agriculture teachers to identify publications coming through the channel, and to rank the general content of a set of publications.

The third and main portion of the study involved a telephone interview with county supervisors to: (1) obtain demographic data concerning supervisors; (2) determine their ranking of organizational sources of a set of publications; (3) determine their ranking of personal sources of a set of publications; (4) determine their ranking of a set of publications regarding how well they meet the needs of vocational agriculture teachers; and (5) determine their ranking of the general content of a set of publications.

The telephone interview was used to minimize the cost of interviewing county vocational supervisors. Several recent studies indicate that telephone interviews may be as effective as face-to-face interviews. One such study by

Kegeles, Fink, and Kirscht had the following conclusions:[1]

> From the results of the present study, as well as from those of other recent studies, it seems reasonable to conclude that the telephone holds great promise as a device for obtaining needed personal and social information. The validity for the information would appear to be as high when obtained from a telephone interview as from a face-to-face interview. The response rates for the telephone are quite similar to those obtained for face-to-face interviews, and the costs of telephone interviews, even for a national sample, are substantially lower.

They further indicated that sample bias could occur because telephone owners as a group were of higher socio-economic status than non-telephone owners.[2] This was not a problem in this study as all respondents had access to an office telephone. Another study of longitudinal nature concerning the social and economic correlates of fertility by Coombs and Freedman indicated that there was little objection from respondents to being interviewed by telephone. They further stipulated that results of the study indicated that it is possible to obtain sensitive information through telephone interviews.[3]

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[1]Stephen S. Kegles, Clinton R. Fink, and John P. Kirscht, "Interviewing a National Sample by Long Distance Telephone," Public Opinion Quarterly, 33:419, Fall, 1969.

[2]Ibid., p. 417.

[3]Lolagene Coombs and Ronald Freedman, "Use of Telephone Interviews in a Longitudinal Fertility Study," Public Opinion Quarterly, 28:112-117, Spring, 1964.

Design of the Study

The design of the study is outlined in the following steps:

1. A group of nine organizations which indirectly or directly served the interests of vocational agriculture teachers was selected to serve as organizational sources for the study. These organizations generally represented a cross-section of various sources of information for vocational agriculture teachers.

2. A group of nine publications was selected to represent a cross-section of resource material generally considered to be relevant in varying extents for vocational agricultural programs. Eight of the organizational sources each provided a publication which was published by that organization. One of the organizations procurred a publication from another publishing source for the study.

3. A group of nine people was selected to serve as personal sources. Responsibilities of each personal sources' position normally includes the dissemination of information, either directly or indirectly, to vocational agriculture teachers. Seven of the personal sources directly represented one of the organizational sources. One of the personal sources indirectly represented an organizational source. One out-of-state organizational source was represented by an in-state personal source.

4. Each publication was assigned to a category reflecting in general the content of the publication.

5. Each personal source cooperated in mailing copies of their respective publication to county supervisors. A cover letter from each personal source suggesting that the publication might be of value to vocational agriculture teachers was included. The cover letters are found in Appendix D. Each supervisor was sent numbers of each publication equal to the number of vocational agriculture teachers in the county plus one.

6. A letter soliciting cooperation in identifying publications coming through the channel and in ranking the general content of the set of publications was sent to vocational agriculture teachers. The letter included two forms for recording the requested information and two stamped self-addressed envelopes for returning the forms. The letter to vocational agriculture teachers is found in Appendix E and the two forms are found in Appendix A and Appendix B.

7. A period of three weeks was allowed for the dissemination of publications from the supervisor to vocational agriculture teachers.

8. A letter was sent to county supervisors requesting their participation in the study from the Assistant Director for Program Administration and the Specialist in Agriculture, both in the Division of Vocational and Technical Education of the Maryland State Department of Education. A return post card was included for the supervisors reply on which they could indicate their willingness to participate and a time for the telephone interview. The letter and the return card are found in Appendix F.

9. The county supervisors were mailed a package containing an instrument and an additional set of the previously disseminated publications to be used in the telephone interview. The instrument is found in Appendix C.

10. The majority of the telephone interviews was conducted within a given week. For various reasons, several of the interviews were conducted during the following week.

11. Analysis of the data was conducted.

Selection of Sources and Publications

The personal sources and organizational sources used in this study were selected on the basis of their traditional service, either directly or indirectly to vocational agriculture teachers. The publications used in the study were selected on the basis of their application to vocational agricultural programs. As was previously indicated, an attempt was made to obtain a cross-section of organizational sources and personal sources which normally disseminate information to vocational agriculture teachers as well as to obtain a set of publications representing a cross-section of resource material relevant to vocational agricultural programs.

The organizational sources used in the study were designated by the symbol S and are listed in Table I. Table II lists the personal sources designated by the symbol A. The titles of publications are listed in Table III and were designated by the symbol X. The tables are presented such that X_1 publication has an S_1 organizational source, and an A_1 personal source. The other publications also follow that

TABLE I

ORGANIZATIONAL SOURCES

S_1 = United States Department of Agriculture

S_2 = American Vocational Association

S_3 = Center for Research and Leadership Development in Vocational and Technical Education

S_4 = National FFA Center

S_5 = Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland

S_6 = Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station

S_7 = Maryland Cooperative Extension Service

S_8 = United States Office of Education

S_9 = Division of Vocational and Technical Education, Maryland State Department of Education

TABLE II

PERSONAL SOURCES

(Purposive Communicators)

A_1 = Frank A. Caflisch, Chief, Utilization and Inquiries Branch, Publications Division, Office of Information, United States Department of Agriculture

A_2 = Lowell A. Burkett, Executive Director, American Vocational Association

A_3 = Melvin Garner, Assistant Director, Office of Program Administration, Division of Vocational-Technical Education, Maryland State Department of Education

A_4 = William Paul Gray, National FFA Executive Secretary, National FFA Center

A_5 = Clifford Nelson, Teacher Educato· of Agricultural Education, University of Maryland

A_6 = I. C. Haut, Director, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Maryland

A_7 = Elwyn E. Deal, Assistant Director, Agricultural Programs, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Maryland

A_8 = H. N. Hunsicker, Program Officer, Agri-Business and Natural Resources Occupations, United States Office of Education

A_9 = Glenn W. Lewis, Specialist in Agriculture, Division of Vocational and Technical Education, Maryland State Department of Education

TABLE III

PUBLICATIONS

X_1 = Popular Publications for the Farmer, Suburbanite, Homemaker, and Consumer

X_2 = Innovative Programs in Agricultural Education

X_3 = Occupational Guidance for Off-Farm Agriculture

X_4 = Advisors Teaching Guide on FFA

X_5 = Opportunity, Challenge, and Reward: A Career Based on Agricultural and Resource Economics

X_6 = Progress through Research: Survey of Agricultural Research in Maryland

X_7 = 1971 Maryland Spray Calendar for Commercial Small Fruit Growers

X_8 = Ornamental Horticulture Technology: Suggested Two-Year Post High School Curriculums

X_9 = Agri Opportunities

pattern. Table IV lists the other communicators in the study and Table V shows the classification of the general content of each publication.

Population and Sample

The population of this study included all Maryland county vocational supervisors of vocational agriculture and all Maryland vocational agriculture teachers. One supervisor from each of the twenty-three counties and Baltimore City and sixty-eight vocational agriculture teachers constituted the population. The small size of the population and the un-uniform distribution of the number of vocational agriculture teachers within the counties dictated that the entire population be used for the study. A total of seventeen county vocational supervisors and fifty-one vocational agriculture teachers were included in the study. Results of the dissemination of the set of publications were obtained from fourteen county supervisors by the reports of agriculture teachers within their counties.

Instruments for Collecting Data

The instruments of the study were developed by the investigator and consist of the following:

1. A check list for vocational agriculture teachers to use in indicating which publications came through the channel and a rank-order form to indicate their ranking of the general content of publications.

TABLE IV

OTHER COMMUNICATORS

C = County supervisors of vocational agriculture in Maryland who are non-purposive communicators or "gatekeepers" in the study

B = Vocational agriculture teachers in local Maryland secondary schools who are receivers in the study

TABLE V

GENERAL CONTENT OF PUBLICATIONS

Publication	Content Classification
X_1	Available resource material
X_2	New and changing program material
X_3	Off-farm instructional material
X_4	FFA-related material
X_5	College recruitment material
X_6	Research findings material
X_7	Technical agriculture material
X_8	Curriculum development material
X_9	Career opportunity material

2. A telephone interview schedule with county supervisors to obtain demographic data and determine their ranking of the personal source, the organizational source, and the general content of a set of publications as well as their rankings of the publications.

As previously mentioned, the county supervisors were mailed an instrument and a set of publications to be used in the telephone interview. The instruments and publications were in separate envelopes inside a larger envelope which was marked: PERSONAL - Research Study Material - DO NOT OPEN UNTIL CONTACTED BY RESEARCHER.

After contacting the county supervisor, and preliminary comments had been made, the telephone interview began with the following questions asked to obtain demographic data:

1. What is your age?
2. Would you describe your background prior to the age of 21 as rural, urban, or suburban?
3. At some point in your life could you describe your background as a farming background?
4. What is your highest degree?
5. How many hours do you have beyond that degree?
6. What was your undergraduate major?
7. What was your graduate major?
8. How many years have you been a supervisor?
9. In what area do you have former teaching experience?

The supervisor was then asked to open the large envelope he had received, remove the two envelopes inside and to open the

one containing the instrument. The supervisor was instructed to read the general instructions of the instrument and turn to the first page and read the instructions and proceed. That page consisted of the rankings of the general content of publications. After the supervisor had completed that ranking, he was asked to read his ranking for recording by the investigator. Rankings by the supervisor of the personal source and the organizational source of the set of publications were obtained in like manner. After completion of those three rankings, the supervisor was asked to open the envelope containing the set of publications and to rank them according to the instructions and to record them on the form provided. The supervisors responses were again recorded by the investigator.

To complete the telephone interview, the supervisor was asked the following questions:

1. Are there any specific reasons you did or did not disseminate a particular publication?
2. How can professionals who develop publications for vocational agriculture teachers better meet the needs of these teachers?
3. Of the individuals listed on the Personal Source Form (Form SC), which name or names did you not recognize?
4. Of the organizations listed on the Organizational Source Form (Form SB), which organization or organizations are you not familiar with?

In addition, the supervisor was asked to make any general comments regarding the study he cared to make. The comments and the answers to the above questions were recorded by the investigator.

Treatment of the Data

The analysis of the data involved the use of the following statistical tests as reported by Siegel:[4] (1) the Fisher Exact Probability Test, (2) the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient, (3) the Kendall Rank Correlation Coefficient, (4) the Kendall Partial Rank Correlation Coefficient, and (5) the Kendall Coefficient of Concordance.

Limitations of the Study

The population of this study was limited to vocational agriculture teachers and their county supervisors in the state of Maryland. Relatively speaking, Maryland has a small number of vocational agricultural programs. As such the number of supervisors and teachers included in the study was low.

An attempt was made to obtain a cross section of personal and organizational sources. However, it was not certain that those chosen were representative of individuals and organizations which serve the interests of vocational agricultural programs. Neither could it be said that the publications selected for this study represented a cross

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[4]Sidney Siegel, Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (New York: McGraw Hill, Inc., 1956), pp. 96-239.

section of publications available to vocational agriculture teachers.

It should also be pointed out that the time allowed for dissemination of publications from county supervisors to vocational agriculture teachers may have possibly been inadequate.

The use of non-parametric studies limited the conclusions of the study to use in the population studied.

Chapter V

FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the presentation of the findings and is divided into three parts: (1) general findings, (2) findings regarding hypotheses, and (3) other findings.

General

Several of the hypotheses of this study related factors of a set of publications to selected characteristics of county supervisors. The factors of the set of publications were: (1) general content, (2) personal source, (3) organizational source, and (4) relative importance of individual publications. These factors have been previously described in the chapter titled DESIGN AND PROCEDURE. The selected characteristics of supervisors were: (1) age, (2) background, (3) education, (4) teaching experience, and (5) years of supervisory experience. An analysis of those selected characteristics follows.

The age of county supervisors ranged from 38 to 65 with the mean age equal to 50.53 years. Of the 17 respondents, 7 or 41 percent were above the mean age with 10 or 59 percent being below the mean age.

The number of supervisors with a farm background was 11 or 65 percent and there were 6 or 35 percent with a non-farm background. For the purposes of this study, a farm background was defined as having lived on a farm for an extended period of time.

The formal education of the county supervisors ranged from a master's degree plus 6 semester hours to a master's degree plus 47 semester hours. The mean of formal education for the supervisors was a master's degree plus 23 semester hours. Ten supervisors were above and 7 were below the mean.

Former teaching experience of the county supervisors included such areas as vocational agriculture, industrial arts, social studies, biology, physical sciences, and mathematics. Of the respondents, 5 or 29 percent had formerly taught vocational agriculture and 12 or 71 percent had taught in other areas. Thirteen or 76 percent of the supervisors had vocational teaching experience while 4 or 24 percent did not have vocational teaching experience. The mean number of years of vocational supervisory experience was 10.53 and the range was 2 to 32 years. Six supervisors were above the mean and 11 were below the mean.

Another consideration in a number of the hypotheses was the frequency of dissemination of the various publications by county supervisors. The mean number of publications disseminated per vocational agriculture teacher was 6.33. The mean number of publications disseminated was used to group county supervisors into those that disseminated more

than the mean and those that disseminated less than the mean. Dissemination results for 3 of the 17 responding supervisors were not obtained from vocational agriculture teachers in the supervisors' respective counties. As such only 14 supervisors' dissemination results were used in determining the mean number of publications disseminated. In addition, several vocational agriculture teachers responded with dissemination results from counties where the supervisor did not participate in the study. Those results were not included in the determination of the mean number of publications disseminated.

Among the demographic data obtained but not used for one of the selected characteristics of the supervisors was the undergraduate major. The undergraduate major of county supervisors included agricultural education, industrial education, horticulture, political science, biology, physical education, and mathematics. Four of the county supervisors had undergraduate majors in agricultural education, while thirteen had undergraduate majors in other areas. The graduate major was also not included as one of the selected characteristics of the supervisors. Three of the supervisors had master's degrees in agricultural education while 14 supervisors had master's degrees in other areas.

The rationale for excluding the undergraduate major and the graduate major from the selected characteristics was that the four supervisors having undergraduate majors in agricultural education were the same four supervisors having

teaching experience in vocational agriculture and also, with one exception, had graduate majors in agricultural education. As former teaching experience was included in the selected characteristics, it was deemed unnecessary to include undergraduate and graduate majors.

Data concerning whether a supervisor had a rural, urban, or suburban background prior to the age of twenty-one was collected but not used as only three of the supervisors had urban or suburban backgrounds.

Findings Regarding Hypotheses

Nine hypotheses guided the analysis of the relationships of selected demographic characteristics and the results and selected opinions of county supervisors of vocational agricultural programs. The selected characteristics of county supervisors were investigated in relationship to the frequency of dissemination of publications in the first hypothesis.

One of the selected characteristics, age of supervisor, had a mean of 50.53 years. The mean number of publications disseminated by county supervisors was 6.33. When the frequencies of supervisors disseminating more than the mean and less than the mean number of publications were placed in a two by two table with the frequencies of supervisors above the mean age and below the mean age, an exact probability of .500 was obtained. This is presented in Table VI, Exact Probabilities of County Supervisors'

TABLE VI

EXACT PROBABILITIES OF COUNTY SUPERVISORS' DISSEMINATION OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPERVISORS*

Characteristic	Disseminated More Than Mean	Disseminated Less Than Mean	Exact Probability
1. Age			
A. Above Mean	3	2	
B. Below Mean	4	5	.500
2. Background			
A. Farm	5	4	
B. Non-Farm	2	3	.500
3. Education			
A. Above Mean	5	3	
B. Below Mean	2	4	.296
4. Teaching Experience			
A. Vocational Agriculture	1	2	
B. Other	6	5	.500
5. Teaching Experience			
A. Vocational	6	4	
B. Other	1	3	.280
6. Years of Supervisory Experience			
A. Above Mean	2	2	
B. Below Mean	5	5	.500

*Based on 14 responding supervisors

Dissemination of a Set of Publications by Selected Characteristics of the Supervisors. The exact probability of .500 indicates that the supervisors above the mean age and below the mean age did not differ significantly in the number of publications they disseminated.

Table VI further shows an exact probability of .500 for the frequencies of a two by two table for supervisors with farm and non-farm backgrounds and supervisors who disseminated more than the mean and less than the mean number of publications. It was concluded that supervisors with farm backgrounds do not differ significantly from supervisors with non-farm backgrounds in the number of disseminated publications.

The mean educational level of the supervisors was a master's degree plus 23 semester hours. When the frequencies of supervisors above the mean educational level and below the mean educational level were placed in a two by two table with the frequencies of supervisors disseminating above the mean and below the mean number of publications, an exact probability of .296 was obtained. This is shown in Table VI. Though the probability does not reach the .05 level of significance, Table VI seemingly indicates a tendency for supervisors with formal education above the mean to disseminate greater quanities of publications than supervisors with formal education below the mean. A greater number of respondents in the study would have possibly shown a higher level of significance thereby establishing the tendency

described as a more conclusive trend.

A two by two table of the frequencies of supervisors with former teaching experience in vocational agriculture and those with other teaching experiences and the frequencies of supervisors disseminating more than the mean and less than the mean numbers of publications yielded an exact probability of .500. The implications of this probability are very limited in that only three supervisors had former teaching experience in vocational agriculture. Even so it must be concluded that there is no significant difference between supervisors with farm backgrounds and non-farm backgrounds in the number of publications disseminated.

A similar two by two table utilizing the frequencies of supervisors with former teaching experience in vocational education and those with other teaching experiences yielded an exact probability of .280. While the probability did not reach a .05 level of significance, Table VI does seem to show a possible trend. Seemingly, supervisors with former teaching experience in vocational education tend to disseminate greater numbers of publications than supervisors with former teaching experience in other than vocational areas. Here again a larger group of respondents would have possibly confirmed that trend.

The frequencies of supervisors with above the mean (mean = 10.53 years) and below the mean years of supervisory experience were analyzed in a two by two table with the frequency of supervisors disseminating above the mean and

below the mean numbers of publications. In regard to that two by two table, an exact probability of .500 as shown in Table VI, was obtained. No significant difference existed between supervisors with above the mean and below the mean supervisory experience regarding the number of publications disseminated.

The various exact probabilities found in Table VI were not highly significant. With the possible exception of formal education and teaching experience in vocational education and other areas, none of the probabilities were close to a significance level of .05. The exact probabilities presented in Table VI did not support the hypothesis that the extent of the county supervisors dissemination of publications to vocational agriculture teachers is directly related to selected characteristics of the supervisors.

The general content of the publications in the study represented a cross-section of published materials relevant to vocational agricultural programs. The rankings of the general content of the set of publications by vocational agriculture teachers is indicative of their self-perceived needs while the rankings by county supervisors indicate their perceptions of what materials vocational agriculture teachers need. A high correlation between the rankings of vocational agriculture teachers and county supervisors would indicate a high awareness by supervisors of the needs of vocational agriculture teachers.

Table VII, Relationship Between County Supervisors' and Vocational Agriculture Teachers' Ranking of the General Content of Publications, shows a correlation between those rankings of .904 which was significant at the .01 level. Apparently, the supervisors or "gatekeepers" in the study were indeed aware of the needs of vocational agriculture teachers regarding the types of materials presented in Table VII. The hypothesis stating that the opinions of county supervisors and vocational agriculture teachers regarding the general content of a set of publications are positively related was accepted.

It was hypothesized that the supervisors ranking of a set of publications and the frequency of their dissemination of those publications would be positively related. In essence this means that the "gatekeepers" of the study would tend to disseminate those publications which they felt would best meet the needs of vocational agricultural teachers. Table VIII, Relationship Between County Supervisors' Ranking of a Set of Publications and the Extent of Their Dissemination of Those Publications, shows a correlation coefficient of -.179. This correlation coefficient has numerous implications for the study, some of which will be discussed later in the section on other findings.

Possible explanations for this inverse correlation could include the limited number of respondents, the narrow range of frequencies of disseminated publications as evidenced in Table VIII, and other factors influence on the dissemination of publications. Of these three possibilities,

TABLE VII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' AND VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS' RANKING OF THE GENERAL CONTENT OF PUBLICATIONS

General Content of Publications	Vocational Agriculture Teachers*	County Supervisors**	rho
	Σ Rank	Σ Rank	
1. Available Resource Material	189	54	
2. New & Changing Program Material	170	48	
3. Off-Farm Instructional Material	286	96	
4. FFA Related Material	290	114	
5. College Recruitment Material	392	143	
6. Research Findings Material	323	109	
7. Technical Agriculture Material	228	100	
8. Curriculum Development Material	181	47	
9. Career Opportunity Material	236	54	
Total	2295	765	.904***

*Based on 51 responding vocational agriculture teachers
**Based on 17 responding supervisors
***Significant at .01 level

TABLE VIII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS AND THE EXTENT OF THEIR DISSEMINATION OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS

Publication	Relative Importance of Publications* Σ Rank	Dissemination of Publications** Frequency	rho
1. X_1	87	23	
2. X_2	70	25	
3. X_3	63	29	
4. X_4	93	33	
5. X_5	104	22	
6. X_6	90	30	
7. X_7	122	33	
8. X_8	77	22	
9. X_9	59	30	
Total	765	247	-.179

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**N = 14 Based on 14 responding supervisors

other factors influence would appear to be the most logical. The possibility also exists that supervisors liked the publications so well that they retained the publication for their own or other uses.

Another possible explanation lies in the limited amount of time available to supervisors during the telephone interview to rank the set of publications. While no actual time limit was imposed, there was a natural pressure to rank the nine publications as quickly as possible. Most of the supervisors took from three to five minutes to complete the ranking. It was also possible that the three week period of time allowed for the dissemination of publications from supervisor to vocational agriculture teacher was insufficient. This could result in some of the publications, particularly those that reached the supervisor last, being disseminated after the vocational agriculture teacher had returned the check list for disseminated publications.

The hypothesis stating that the opinions of county supervisors regarding the relative importance of a set of publications are positively related to the extent of the supervisors' dissemination of those publications was rejected.

The personal sources and organizational sources used in the study were directly or indirectly related. Seven of the personal sources held leadership responsibilities in the organizations serving as organizational sources. One personal source represented a different organization (department) within a larger organization. One personal source represented an

organization with which he had no direct connection. It appears logical that a professional person's position within an organization has a bearing on how other professionals would view him. In other words, the opinions a person may hold regarding a particular organization would possibly influence his opinions of persons within that organization. It was hypothesized that a positive relationship would exist between the personal source and organizational source of a set of publications. Table IX, Relationship Between County Supervisors' Ranking of the Personal Source and the Organizational Source of a Set of Publications, shows a correlation coefficient of .325. A coefficient of correlation of .600 would have been needed in order to obtain significance at the .05 level.

It appears logical that the relative importance of a publication in this study would depend in part on the opinion that the supervisor holds regarding the personal source of that publication. As such it was hypothesized that a positive relationship would exist between the supervisors ranking of the personal source and their ranking of the relative importance of the publications in the study. A correlation coefficient of .121 was obtained for that relationship as shown in Table X, Relationship Between County Supervisors' Ranking of a Set of Publications and Their Ranking of the Personal Source of Those Publications. There appeared to be no significant relationship regarding those two rankings.

TABLE IX

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE PERSONAL SOURCE AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOURCE OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS*

Publication	Personal Source of Publications Σ Rank	Organizational Source of Publications Σ Rank	rho
1. X_1	98	52	
2. X_2	112	104	
3. X_3	84	120	
4. X_4	97	99	
5. X_5	58	58	
6. X_6	91	99	
7. X_7	98	66	
8. X_8	100	112	
9. X_9	27	55	
Total	765	765	.325

*Based on 17 responding supervisors

TABLE X

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS AND THEIR RANKING OF THE PERSONAL SOURCE OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS*

Publication	Relative Importance of Publications Σ Rank	Personal Source of Publications Σ Rank	rho
1. X_1	87	98	
2. X_2	70	112	
3. X_3	63	84	
4. X_4	93	97	
5. X_5	104	58	
6. X_6	90	91	
7. X_7	122	98	
8. X_8	77	100	
9. X_9	59	27	
Total	765	765	.121

*Based on 17 responding supervisors

A positive relationship was also predicted for the relationship between the supervisors ranking of the relative importance of publications and their ranking of the organizational sources of those publications utilizing a rationale that their opinion of the publications is dependent in part on their opinions regarding the organizational source. Again no significant relationship was found. Table XI, Relationship Between County Supervisors' Ranking of a Set of Publications and Their Ranking of the Organizational Sources of Those Publications, shows a correlation coefficient of -.254.

The meaningfulness of the correlation coefficients found in Table X and Table XI may be questionable in that when the county supervisors ranked the publications in regard to relative importance for vocational agriculture teachers, they were not instructed as to which personal sources and organizational sources applied to the individual publications.

As such, qualifications must be attached to the rejection of the hypothesis stating that the opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, and the relative importance of a set of publications are positively related.

The classification of general content for publications as has been previously noted reflects the overall general nature of each publication. It appears reasonable that supervisors would select those publications for dissemination

TABLE XI

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS AND THEIR RANKING OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOURCES OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS*

Publication	Relative Importance of Publications Σ Rank	Organizational Source of Publications Σ Rank	rho
1. X_1	87	52	
2. X_2	70	104	
3. X_3	63	120	
4. X_4	93	99	
5. X_5	104	58	
6. X_6	90	99	
7. X_7	122	66	
8. X_8	77	112	
9. X_9	59	55	
Total	765	765	-.254

*Based on 17 responding supervisors

to vocational agriculture teachers which in his estimation represent the types or kinds of materials most needed by vocational agriculture teachers. It also appears logical that the supervisor would hold opinions regarding the general content and the relative importance of a set of publications which were similar.

A coefficient of .671 was obtained when the supervisors rankings of a set of publications was correlated with their ranking of the general content of the same publications. The correlation coefficient which is shown in Table XII, Relationships Between County Supervisors' Ranking of a Set of Publications and Their Ranking of the General Content of Those Publications, was significant at the .05 level. It could be argued that the correlation provides more justification for the original classification of the general content of the publications than it does for indicating that supervisors may base their opinions of a publication in part on its general content. Even so, the hypothesis stating that the opinions of county supervisors regarding the general content and the relative importance of a set of publications are positively related was accepted.

Another hypothesis of the study stated that the opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, the general content, and the relative importance of a set of publications are related to selected characteristics of the supervisors. In order to test the hypothesis, the supervisors were divided into groups

TABLE XII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS AND THEIR RANKING OF THE GENERAL CONTENT OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS*

Publication	Relative Importance of Publications Σ Rank	General Content of Publications Σ Rank	rho
1. X_1	87	54	
2. X_2	70	48	
3. X_3	63	96	
4. X_4	93	114	
5. X_5	104	143	
6. X_6	90	109	
7. X_7	122	100	
8. X_8	77	47	
9. X_9	59	54	
Total	765	765	.671**

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Significant at .05 level

according to the following: (A) age above and below the mean, (B) farm and non-farm backgrounds, (C) education above and below the mean, (D) vocational agriculture teaching experience and other teaching experience, (E) vocational teaching experience and other teaching experience, and (F) years of supervisory experience above and below the mean. The supervisors' rankings of each of the factors of publications were then correlated according to the above groupings. An example of this would be a correlation of the rankings of the general content of publications between supervisors with farm and non-farm backgrounds.

It should be noted that a highly positive correlation between those or other groups would indicate that there was not significant difference between the two groups in regard to their rankings. Thus the hypothesis would not be supported. A highly negative correlation in that same instance would indicate that there were significant differences between the two groups in regard to their rankings. In this case the hypothesis would be supported.

Table XIII, Correlations of Groups of Supervisors' Ranking of the Personal Source of a Set of Publications Based on Selected Characteristics of the Supervisors, presents the first set of correlations used in testing the hypothesis. Correlation coefficients of .471, .588, and .383 were obtained respectively for rankings of the personal source of publications by supervisors with (A) farm and non-farm backgrounds, (B) vocational agriculture and other teaching

TABLE XIII

CORRELATIONS OF GROUPS OF COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE PERSONAL SOURCE OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS BASED ON SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPERVISORS*

Characteristic	Group I	Group II	rho
1. Age	Above Mean	Below Mean	.571
2. Background	Farm	Non-Farm	.471
3. Education	Above Mean	Below Mean	.633**
4. Teaching Experience	Vocational Agriculture	Other	.450
5. Teaching Experience	Vocational	Other	.550
6. Years of Supervisory Experience	Above Mean	Below Mean	.383

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Significant at .05 level

experience, and (C) above and below the mean years of supervisory experience. None of the coefficients were significant at the .05 level.

Correlation of the rankings of the personal source of publications by supervisors with above the mean and below the mean ages and with vocational teaching experience and other teaching experience yielded coefficients of .571 and .550 respectively. Though these coefficients are not significant they do approach significance in that a coefficient of .600 would have been significant at the .05 level. The correlation coefficients of .571 and .550 may tend to indicate that supervisors with above the mean and below the mean ages and supervisors with vocational teaching experience and other teaching experience differ little, if any, in their rankings of the personal source of publications.

Table XIII further shows a correlation coefficient of .633 for the rankings of the personal source of publications by supervisors with above the mean and below the mean educational level. The coefficient is significant at the .05 level. This would indicate that there are no significant differences between the rankings of the personal source of publications of supervisors with above the mean and below the mean educational level.

Table XIV, Correlations of Groups of Supervisors' Ranking of the Organizational Source of a Set of Publications Based on Selected Characteristics of the Supervisors, presents several significant correlations. Correlation coefficients

TABLE XIV

CORRELATIONS OF GROUPS OF COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOURCE OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS BASED ON SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPERVISORS*

Characteristic	Group I	Group II	rho
1. Age	Above Mean	Below Mean	.700**
2. Background	Farm	Non-Farm	.813***
3. Education	Above Mean	Below Mean	.800***
4. Teaching Experience	Vocational Agriculture	Other	.754**
5. Teaching Experience	Vocational	Other	.871***
6. Years of Supervisory Experience	Above Mean	Below Mean	.808***

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Significant at .05 level
***Significant at .01 level

for the rankings of organizational source by supervisors with above and below the mean ages and teaching experience in vocational agriculture and in other instructional areas were .700 and .754 respectively. Those coefficients were significant at the .05 level. Correlation coefficients of .813, .800, .871, and .808 were respectively obtained for the rankings of supervisors with (A) farmaand non-farm backgrounds, (B) above the mean and below the mean educational levels, (C) vocational teaching experience and teaching experience in other areas, and (D) above the mean and below the mean years of supervisory experience. Those four coefficients were significant at the .01 level. All of the correlations coefficients in Table XIV indicate that there is no significant difference in the supervisors' ranking of organizational source by selected characteristics of the supervisors.

Table XV, Correlations of Groups of Supervisors' Ranking of the General Content of a Set of Publications Based on Selected Characteristics of the Supervisors, presents findings which are similar to the findings regarding organizational source in Table XIV. All of the correlation coefficients presented indicated that the supervisors did not differ in their rankings of organizational source by their selected characteristics.

Table XV yielded coefficients of .763, .733, .763, and .763 for rankings of the organizational source by supervisors with (A) farm and non-farm backgrounds, (B) above and

TABLE XV

CORRELATIONS OF GROUPS OF COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE GENERAL CONTENT OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS BASED ON SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPERVISORS*

Characteristic	Group I	Group II	rho
1. Age	Above Mean	Below Mean	.850***
2. Background	Farm	Non-Farm	.763**
3. Education	Above Mean	Below Mean	.733**
4. Teaching Experience	Vocational Agriculture	Other	.763**
5. Teaching Experience	Vocational	Other	.763**
6. Years of Supervisory Experience	Above Mean	Below Mean	.846***

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Significant at .05 level
***Significant at .01 level

below the mean educational levels, (C) vocational agriculture teaching experience and other teaching experience, and (D) vocational teaching experience and other teaching experience respectively. Those four coefficients were significant at the .05 level. Correlation coefficients of .850 and .846 were obtained respectively for the rankings of organizational source by supervisors with (A) above and below the mean ages, and (B) above and below the mean years of supervisory experience. Those two coefficients were significant at the .01 level.

Table XVI, Correlations of Groups of Supervisors' Ranking of a Set of Publications Based on Selected Characteristics of the Supervisors, shows correlation coefficients which are lower than those found in Tables XIV and XV. Table XVI shows only one correlation coefficient which was significant. The correlation of the rankings of the relative importance of a set of publications between supervisors with above the mean and below the mean years of supervisory experience yielded a coefficient of .646 which was significant at the .05 level. Again, this would indicate no significant difference between the two groups in regard to their rankings.

One negative correlation was obtained in the set shown in Table XVI. Though far from an acceptable level of significance, it does show a different direction than the numerous other coefficients of concern to the previously stated hypothesis. The correlation of the rankings of the relative importance of a set of publications between supervisors with vocational agriculture teaching experience and

TABLE XVI

CORRELATIONS OF GROUPS OF COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS BASED ON SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPERVISORS*

Characteristic	Group I	Group II	rho
1. Age	Above Mean	Below Mean	.504
2. Background	Farm	Non-Farm	.513
3. Education	Above Mean	Below Mean	.167
4. Teaching Experience	Vocational Agriculture	Other	-.171
5. Teaching Experience	Vocational	Other	.396
6. Years of Supervisory Experience	Above Mean	Below Mean	.646**

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Significant at .05 level

other teaching experience yielded a coefficient of -.171.

Only five supervisors had former teaching experience in vocational agriculture. Perhaps a larger group of respondents would have shown a more negative relationship, thus possibly indicating that there are significant difference between those two groupings regarding their rankings of a set of publications.

Correlation coefficients of .504, .513, .396, and .167 were obtained respectively for the rankings of the relative importance of a set of publications between supervisors with (A) above the mean and below the mean ages, (B) farm and non-farm backgrounds, (C) vocational teaching experience and other teaching experience, and (D) above the mean and below the mean educational level. No acceptable level of significance was reached by any of the four coefficients.

On the basis of the correlation coefficients in Tables XIII, XIV, XV, and XVI, the hypothesis stating that the opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, the general content, and the relative importance of a set of publications are related to selected characteristics of the supervisors was rejected. Significant negative correlations would have been needed to accept the hypothesis. No significant negative correlations were obtained.

In this investigation of some of the factors associated with the selection of publications by county

supervisors for dissemination to vocational agriculture teachers, it would be helpful to know if these "gatekeepers" use the same criteria for publication selection. A measure of whether the same criteria is being used is provided by the Kendall coefficient of concordance: W. Siegel states that:

> A high or significant value of W may be interpreted as meaning that the observers or judges are applying essentially the same standard in ranking the N objects under study.[1]

Seigel further indicates that the coefficient of concordance is a measure of agreement between the judges.

It was hypothesized that the opinions among county supervisors regarding various factors of a set of publications would be related.

Table XVII, The Agreement Among County Supervisors' Regarding Their Ranking of a Set of Publications, shows a coefficient of concordance of .189. The coefficient is significant at a .01 level. This would indicate that the county supervsors tend to use the same criteria in ranking the relative importance of publications or more simply that they tend to agree on which publications are most needed by vocational agriculture teachers.

Table XVIII, The Agreement Among County Supervisors' Regarding Their Ranking of the Personal Source of a Set of Publications, shows a coefficient of concordance of .321 which is significant at the .001 level.

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[1]Siegel, op. cit., pp. 229-239.

TABLE XVII

THE AGREEMENT AMONG COUNTY SUPERVISORS' REGARDING THEIR RANKING OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS*

Publication	Relative Importance of Publications $\sum$ Rank	W
1. X_1	87	
2. X_2	70	
3. X_3	63	
4. X_4	93	
5. X_5	104	
6. X_6	90	
7. X_7	122	
8. X_8	77	
9. X_9	59	
Total	765	.189**

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Significant at .005 level

TABLE XVIII

THE AGREEMENT AMONG COUNTY SUPERVISORS' REGARDING THEIR RANKING OF THE PERSONAL SOURCE OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS*

Publication	Personal Source	Personal Source of Publications Σ Rank	W
1. X_1	A_1	98	
2. X_2	A_2	112	
3. X_3	A_3	84	
4. X_4	A_4	97	
5. X_5	A_5	58	
6. X_6	A_6	91	
7. X_7	A_7	98	
8. X_8	A_8	100	
9. X_9	A_9	27	
Total		765	.321**

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Significant at .0005 level

Table XIX, The Agreement Among County Supervisors' Regarding Their Ranking of the Organizational Source of a Set of Publications, shows a coefficient of concordance of .334 which is also significant at the .001 level.

Table XX, The Agreement Among County Supervisors' Regarding Their Ranking of the General Content of a Set of Publications, also shows a coefficient of concordance of .569 which is significant at the .001 level. The coefficients of concordance in Tables XVIII, XIX, and XX indicate that the supervisors tend to agree in their rankings and tend to use the same criteria in arriving at those rankings.

Table XXI, The Agreement Among County Supervisors' Regarding Their Dissemination of a Set of Publications, shows a coefficient of concordance of .014 which is not significant at an acceptable level. The implications of this coefficient are that the supervisors show little agreement in regard to the publications which they select for subsequent dissemination to vocational agriculture teachers. It seems that supervisors do not use the same criteria in the selection process. The implications of this coefficient will be discussed in more detail in the section on other findings.

With the exception of the supervisors' extent of dissemination of publications, the following hypothesis was accepted. The opinions among county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, the general content, and the relative importance of a set of publications, as well as the extent of dissemination of those publications, are related.

TABLE XIX

THE AGREEMENT AMONG COUNTY SUPERVISORS' REGARDING THEIR RANKING OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOURCE OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS*

Publication	Organizational Source	Organizational Source of Publications Σ Rank	W
1. X_1	S_1	52	
2. X_2	S_2	104	
3. X_3	S_3	120	
4. X_4	S_4	99	
5. X_5	S_5	58	
6. X_6	S_6	99	
7. X_7	S_7	66	
8. X_8	S_8	112	
9. X_9	S_9	55	
Total		765	.334**

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Significant at .0005 level

TABLE XX

THE AGREEMENT AMONG COUNTY SUPERVISORS' REGARDING THEIR RANKING OF THE GENERAL CONTENT OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS*

Publication	Classification of General Content	General Content of Publications Σ Rank	W
1. X_1	Available resource material	54	
2. X_2	New and changing program material	48	
3. X_3	Off-farm instructional material	96	
4. X_4	FFA-related material	114	
5. X_5	College recruitment material	143	
6. X_6	Research findings material	109	
7. X_7	Technical agriculture material	100	
8. X_8	Curriculum development material	47	
9. X_9	Career opportunity material	54	
	Total	765	.569**

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Significant at .0005 level

TABLE XXI

THE AGREEMENT AMONG COUNTY SUPERVISORS' REGARDING THEIR DISSEMINATION OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS*

Publication	Dissemination of Publications Frequencies	W
1. X_1	23	
2. X_2	25	
3. X_3	29	
4. X_4	33	
5. X_5	22	
6. X_6	30	
7. X_7	33	
8. X_8	22	
9. X_9	30	
Total	247	.014

*Based on 14 responding supervisors

In previous determinations of correlation in this study, the Spearman rank correlation coefficient was used. One limitation of the Spearman rank order formula is that it is not generalizable to partial correlation. The Kendall tau rank order coefficient, though, is generalizable to partial correlation.

The purpose of partial correlation is to provide a basis by which the effects of a third variable may be held constant while determining the correlation between two other variables. This, in essence, allows the investigator to determine if the third variable is independent of the other two variables.

The Kendall rank order partial correlation coefficient was used to test one of the hypothesis of the study. It was hypothesized that the opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source and the organizational source of a set of publications are positively related when each supervisor disseminates the same quanity of each publication in the set. In order to determine partial correlation in this case, it was first necessary to determine Kendall's correlation coefficients for the factors involved.

Table XXII, Relationship Between County Supervisors' Ranking of the Personal Source and the Organizational Source of a Set of Publications: Kendall Tau, shows a coefficient of correlation of .257. The coefficient was not significant at an acceptable level.

TABLE XXII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE PERSONAL SOURCE AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOURCE OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS*: KENDALL TAU

Publication	Personal Source of Publications Σ Rank	Organizational Source of Publications Σ Rank	tau
1. X_9	27	55	
2. X_5	58	58	
3. X_3	84	120	
4. X_6	91	99	
5. X_4	97	99	
6. X_1	98	52	
7. X_7	98	66	
8. X_8	100	112	
9. X_2	112	104	
Total	765	765	.257

*Based on 17 responding supervisors

It should be noted that Table IX, which was previously presented, shows a Spearman correlation coefficient of .325. The coefficient of that correlation between the personal source and the organizational source of a set of publications also was not significant at an acceptable level.

The Kendall correlation coefficient of .029 found in Table XXIII, Relationship Between County Supervisors' Ranking of the Personal Source of a Set of Publications and the Extent of Their Dissemination of Those Publications, was not significant at an acceptable level. It would appear that supervisors' opinions of the personal source of publications has little influence on his dissemination of those publications.

Table XXIV, Relationship Between County Supervisors' Ranking of the Organizational Source of a Set of Publications and the Extent of Their Dissemination of Those Publications, shows a Kendall coefficient of correlation of .088. As this coefficient is not significant, it would also appear that supervisors' opinions of the organizational source of publications has little influence on their dissemination of those publications.

A partial correlation of supervisors' ranking of the personal source and organizational source of a set of publications, when their dissemination of those publications are held constant, is presented in Table XXV. A partial coefficient of .257 was not significant at an acceptable level.

In comparing the correlation coefficients obtained in Tables XXII, XXIII, and XXIV, as summarized in Table XV, it

TABLE XXIII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE PERSONAL SOURCE OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS AND THE EXTENT OF THEIR DISSEMINATION OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS

Publication	Personal Source of Publications* Σ Rank	Dissemination of Publications** Frequency	tau
1. X_9	27	30	
2. X_5	58	22	
3. X_3	84	29	
4. X_6	91	30	
5. X_4	97	33	
6. X_1	98	23	
7. X_7	98	33	
8. X_8	100	22	
9. X_2	112	25	
Total	765	247	.029

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Based on 14 responding supervisors

TABLE XXIV

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOURCE OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS AND THE EXTENT OF THEIR DISSEMINATION OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS

Publication	Organizational Source of Publications* Σ Rank	Dissemination of Publications** Frequency	tau
1. X_1	52	23	
2. X_9	55	30	
3. X_5	58	22	
4. X_7	66	33	
5. X_4	99	33	
6. X_6	99	30	
7. X_2	104	25	
8. X_8	112	22	
9. X_3	120	29	
Total	765	247	.088

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Based on 14 responding supervisors

TABLE XXV

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE PERSONAL SOURCE AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOURCE OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS WHEN THE EXTENT OF THE SUPERVISORS' DISSEMINATION OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS IS HELD CONSTANT*

Correlation of	tau	Partial tau
1. Personal Source and Organizational Source of Publications	.257	
2. Personal Source and Extent of Dissemination of Publications	.029	
3. Organizational Source and Extent of Dissemination of Publications	.088	
		.256

*Data for ranking of personal source and organizational source based on 17 responding supervisors. Data for extent of dissemination of publications based on 14 responding supervisors.

must be concluded that the relationship between the supervisors' ranking of the personal source and the organizational source of a set of publications is relatively independent of their dissemination of publications. This result should be expected as neither of the supervisors' opinions of the personal source or the organizational source of publications, as previously discussed, seemed to have influence on their dissemination of publications.

The hypothesis concerning the relationship between supervisors rankings of the personal source and the organizational source with the extent of dissemination held constant was rejected.

The ranking of the general content of publications by vocational agriculture teachers indicates their self-perceived needs regarding types of publications. It would seem that if county supervisors were disseminating the right publications to meet the self-perceived needs of vocational agriculture teachers that a high positive correlation would exist between the vocational agriculture teachers ranking of the general content of publications and the supervisors dissemination of those publications.

Table XXVI, Relationship Between Vocational Agriculture Teachers' Ranking of the General Content of a Set of Publications and the Supervisors' Extent of Dissemination of Those Publications, shows a correlation coefficient of -.196. This would seem to indicate that supervisors do not disseminate publications which meet the self-perceived needs of the vocational agriculture teachers.

TABLE XXVI

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS' RANKING OF THE GENERAL CONTENT OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS AND THE SUPERVISORS' EXTENT OF DISSEMINATION OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS

Publications	General Content of Publications* Σ Rank	Dissemination of Publications** Frequencies	rho
1. X_1	189	23	
2. X_2	170	25	
3. X_3	286	29	
4. X_4	290	33	
5. X_5	392	22	
6. X_6	323	30	
7. X_7	228	33	
8. X_8	181	22	
9. X_9	236	30	
Total	2295	247	-.196

*Based on 51 responding vocational agriculture teachers
**Based on 14 responding county supervisors

The hypothesis that the opinions of vocational agriculture teachers regarding the general content of a set of publications are positively related to the extent of the supervisors dissemination of those publications was rejected.

Other Findings

The central thesis of this study was that selected demographic characteristics and selected opinions of county supervisors affect the county supervisors choice of publications for dissemination to vocational agriculture teachers. The selected opinions of county supervisors refer to their rankings of several factors of publications which were the personal source, the organizational source, the general content, and the relative importance of a set of publications. The findings so far have not indicated that those factors account for the supervisors' dissemination of publications. Even so, the findings do not rule out the possibility that the factors of publications are operative in combination with other factors. It would appear that factors other than those investigated are influencing the supervisors' selection and dissemination of publications. The following discussion of some of the previous findings and some other findings seemingly support a contention that factors other than those investigated are operative.

As previously mentioned, supervisors apparently do not disseminate the publications that vocational agriculture teachers think they need. Table XXVI has shown a negative

correlation between the supervisors' dissemination of publications and the vocational agriculture teachers preference for types of publications as evidenced by their ranking of the general content of publications.

When the previous relationship was investigated in terms of the demographic characteristics of the supervisors, none of the resultant groups showed indications of disseminating publications which met the self-perceived needs of the vocational agriculture teachers. Table XXVII, Correlations of Vocational Agriculture Teachers' Ranking of the General Content of a Set of Publications with the County Supervisors' Extent of Dissemination of Those Publications by Selected Characteristics of the Supervisors, shows predominately negative correlations. While supervisors above the mean age did show a positive correlation of .243 with the vocational agriculture teachers ranking of the general content of publications, this was not close to an acceptable level of significance. Though none of the coefficients of correlation were significant, the variation between correlations for a given characteristic do seem to be of interest and will be discussed later.

Though the supervisors apparently do not disseminate publications to meet the needs of the vocational agriculture teachers, the supervisors are seemingly aware of the needs of the teachers as evidenced in the previous discussion of Table VII. As also previously evidenced, the county supervisors do not tend to disseminate publications according to their

TABLE XXVII

CORRELATIONS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS' RANKING OF THE GENERAL CONTENT OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS WITH THE COUNTY SUPERVISORS' EXTENT OF DISSEMINATION OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPERVISORS*

Characteristics	rho**
1. Age	
A. Above Mean	.243
B. Below Mean	-.176
2. Background	
A. Farm	-.345
B. Non-Farm	-.061
3. Education	
A. Above Mean	-.034
B. Below Mean	-.445
4. Teaching Experience	
A. Vocational Agriculture	-.320
B. Other	-.235
5. Teaching Experience	
A. Vocational	-.310
B. Other	.009
6. Years of Supervisory Experience	
A. Above Mean	-.282
B. Below Mean	-.169

*Data for ranking of general content of publications based on 51 responding agriculture teachers. Data for extent of dissemination of publications based on 14 responding supervisors.

**Corrected for ties.

rankings of those same publications. Table VIII has shown a correlation coefficient of -.179 between the supervisors ranking of a set of publications and their dissemination of those publications.

Table XXIII and Table XXIV have further shown that supervisors do not tend to disseminate publications according to their rankings of either the personal source or the organizational source of publications. Nor do the supervisors tend to disseminate publications according to their ranking of the general content of publications. Table XXVIII, Relationship Between County Supervisors' Ranking of the General Content of Publications and the Extent of Their Dissemination of Those Publications, shows a correlation of -.329 for that relationship. The coefficient of correlation was not significant at the .05 level.

As previously discussed, Table XXI has shown that supervisors apparently do not agree in regard to the publications that they disseminate which indicates that they probably do not use the same criteria for selection and dissemination.

While it is seemingly apparent that the factors of publications investigated in this study do not alone provide the basis by which supervisors select and disseminate publications, it is not apparent what does influence the supervisors' selection process. Possible influencing factors could include such considerations as timeliness of publications, work load of the county supervisor, attitudes of the

TABLE XXVIII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE GENERAL CONTENT OF PUBLICATIONS AND THE EXTENT OF THEIR DISSEMINATION OF THOSE PUBLICATIONS

Publication	General Content of Publications* Σ Rank	Dissemination of Publication** Σ Rank	rho
1. X_1	54	23	
2. X_2	48	25	
3. X_3	96	29	
4. X_4	114	33	
5. X_5	143	22	
6. X_6	109	30	
7. X_7	100	33	
8. X_8	47	22	
9. X_9	54	30	
Total	765	247	-.329

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Based on 14 responding supervisors

supervisors, amount of publications being disseminated, and numerous other factors. Future studies will perhaps investigate other factors which may influence the county supervisor to select and disseminate publications.

Other findings of importance to the study are noted when comparisons of two previously discussed tables are made. A portion of the previously mentioned trends of Table VI are of interest when compared to variations in correlations presented in Table XXVII. It should be emphasized that the trends of concern in Table VI did not show significance at an acceptable level, and the variations in correlations shown in Table XXVII were not tested for significance.

It also should be stated that the trends of concern in Tables VI and XXVII are possibly limited by the low number of respondents in the study. For these reasons those trends could not be definitely established. As mentioned in a previous discussion, Table VI seems to indicate that supervisors with above mean education tend to disseminate more publications than supervisors with below the mean education. Relatively speaking, Table XXVII shows that supervisors with above the mean education tend to disseminate publications which more closely meet the needs of vocational agriculture teachers than do supervisors with below the mean education. That table shows a coefficient of -.034 for the correlation between the vocational agriculture teachers ranking of the general content of publications and the extent of dissemination of publications by supervisors with above the mean education.

The table further shows a coefficient of -.445 for the correlation between the vocational agriculture teachers ranking of the general content of publications and the extent of dissemination of publications by supervisors with below the mean education.

It is interesting to note the trend that supervisors with above the mean education send more publications and are more likely to meet the perceived needs of vocational agriculture teachers, while supervisors with below the mean education send less publications and are less likely to meet the needs of the teachers. It is possible that supervisors with above the mean education are being more selective of the publications that they disseminate than supervisors with below the mean education.

In terms of the model for the communication channel of this study, the preceeding would indicate that the supervisors with above the mean education are more functional in their role as gatekeepers than supervisors with below the mean education.

In another comparison involving Tables VI and XXVII, indications were that supervisors with former vocational teaching experience tended to disseminate more publications and to be less likely to meet the needs of vocational agriculture teachers than teachers with non-vocational teaching experience. Table XXVII showed coefficients of -.310 and .009 for the correlation pertaining to supervisors with vocational teaching experience and non-vocational teaching experience respectively.

An explanation for the above trends would seemingly be similar to the explanation for the trends in the previous comparison of Tables VI and XXVII.

It is a possibility that supervisors with other than vocational teaching experience are more selective of publications, tend to send only those publications which they feel specifically meet the teachers needs, and are more functional in the gatekeeping process. It would also appear possible that supervisors with vocational teaching experience are less selective of publications, tend to send any publications which may possibly meet the needs of the teachers, and tend to be an "open gate" in terms of the gatekeeping process.

Variations in the other correlations regarding a given characteristic as shown in Table XXVII are worthy of mention. The extent of supervisors' dissemination of publications on the basis of their selected characteristics was correlated with the self-perceived needs of vocational agriculture teachers as evidenced by the teachers' rankings of the general content of a set of publications.

Supervisors above the mean age tended to disseminate publications which more closely met the self-perceived needs of vocational agriculture teachers than supervisors below the mean age. Table XXVII shows correlation coefficients of .243 and -.176 for correlations pertaining to above the mean supervisors and below the mean supervisors respectively.

Supervisors with non-farm backgrounds tended to disseminate publications which more closely met the self-perceived needs of vocational agriculture teachers than did

supervisors with farm backgrounds. Correlation coefficients of -.061 and -.345 were respectively obtained for those groupings of supervisors.

Groupings of supervisors according to former vocational agriculture teaching experience and other former teaching experiences yielded correlations of -.404 and -.125 respectively. The tendency is noted for supervisors with other former teaching experiences to disseminate publications closer to the self-perceived needs of vocational agriculture teachers than do supervisors with former vocational agriculture teaching experience.

Groupings of supervisors based on years of supervisory experience above the mean and below the mean yielded coefficients of correlation of -.282 and -.169 respectively. This would tend to indicate that supervisors below the mean years of supervisory experience disseminate publications which more closely meet the self-perceived needs of vocational agriculture teachers than do supervisors with above the mean years of supervisory experience.

It should be noted that none of Table XXVII correlation coefficients were close to an acceptable level of significance. It was previously noted that no test of significance could be determined for the variation between correlations for each characteristic. As such, qualifications must be attached to the cited trends.

Another consideration of the study is that the rankings by supervisors of the personal sources of the publications may have been limited by whether they had previous

knowledge of the source. During the telephone interview, the supervisors were asked to indicate which of the sources that they did not know. Frequencies of times each personal source was mentioned as "not known" were used to construct a ranking. It would appear logical that the supervisors would rank highest the personal sources of publications that they knew best. As such, a positive relationship would be expected between the supervisors ranking of the personal sources of publications and their knowledge of those sources.

Table XXIX, Relationship Between County Supervisors' Ranking of the Personal Source of a Set of Publications and the Extent to Which They Knew Those Sources, shows a correlation coefficient of .375. While this coefficient was not significant at the .05 level, it may very well indicate that knowledge of source influences the supervisors ranking of the personal source of publications.

Another finding concerns the personal and organizational sources of the publications used in the study. Both the personal and organizational sources are found at several levels. Those levels were national, university, and state.

A visual analysis of the rankings by county supervisors of the personal sources of the publications indicated that for sources of publications the supervisors in general preferred state sources to university sources and preferred university sources to national sources. In general those same preferences by the supervisors applied to the organizational source of publications. Apparently the closer the

TABLE XXIX

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY SUPERVISORS' RANKING OF THE PERSONAL SOURCES OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY KNEW THOSE SOURCES

Personal Source	Personal Source of Publications* Σ Rank	Personal Sources Unknown By Supervisors** Frequencies	rho
1. A_1	98	16	
2. A_2	112	1	
3. A_3	84	0	
4. A_4	97	6	
5. A_5	58	3	
6. A_6	91	10	
7. A_7	98	8	
8. A_8	100	5	
9. A_9	27	0	
Total	765	49	.375

*Based on 17 responding supervisors
**Based on 14 responding supervisors

relationship of the supervisors to the source the more desirable it is as a source of publications.

In regard to the ranking of the general content of a set of publications, vocational agriculture teachers' self-perceived needs are shown in descending order of importance as follows:

1. New and changing program material.
2. Curriculum development material.
3. Available resource material.
4. Technical agriculture material.
5. Career opportunity material.
6. Off-farm instructional material.
7. FFA related material.
8. Research findings material.
9. College recruitment material.

Seemingly the first two preferences are indicative of the vocational agriculture teachers concern for the changing nature of vocational agricultural programs. It is interesting to note that the emphasis for the development of materials for vocational agriculture seemingly is presently centered on the changing nature of vocational agricultural programs. Perhaps the last choice by vocational agriculture teachers is indicative of the general nature of vocational education in that it has not traditionally attempted to prepare students for education at the college level.

The county supervisors perceptions of what they felt were the needs of vocational agriculture teachers as evidenced

by their rankings of the general content of a set of publications are presented in descending order of importance as follows:

1. Curriculum development material.
2. New and changing program material.
3. (tied) Available resource material.
3. (tied) Career opportunity material.
5. Off-farm instructional material.
6. Technical agriculture material.
7. Research findings material.
8. FFA related material.
9. College recruitment material.

The county supervisors apparently agree with vocational agriculture teachers that the changing nature of the program is of most concern as evidenced by the supervisors first two preferences. The supervisors also agree that college recruitment material is the least needed type of publication. Table VII, as previously discussed, has shown that supervisors and vocational agriculture teachers are in high agreement regarding what types of publications are needed by vocational agriculture teachers.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The development of a hierarchy for local, state, and national agencies concerned with secondary vocational education occurred chiefly as a result of federal funding for vocational education. That hierarchy serves as a channel of communication to local vocational educators. County vocational supervisors of vocational agricultural programs in Maryland occupy a position in the channel. In order to improve the professional competence of local vocational agricultural teachers, those county supervisors' disseminate information in the form of publications relevant to vocational agricultural programs to those teachers. It is in the selection of publications that county supervisors function as "gatekeepers."

The "gatekeeper" was first identified by Kurt Lewin in a study during World War II[1] of the housewife as a selector of food for the family. David Manning White first applied Lewin's gatekeeper to mass communications in a classic study of a telegraph wire editor.[2] Other studies of the gatekeeper in mass communications research followed. For the purposes

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[1]Lewin, op. cit.

[2]White, op. cit.

of this study a gatekeeper is defined as an individual within a communication system who, through a process of selection, restricts the flow of information to the receivers.

An adaptation of the Westley-Mclean conceptual model for communications research was used as a model for the communication channel of this study. The adapted model included designations of the organizational sources, the personal sources (purposive communicators), the gatekeepers (non-purposive communicators), and receivers of messages.

The problem of this study centered on an investigation of some of the factors associated with the selection of publications by county supervisors for dissemination to vocational agriculture teachers. The central thesis of the study was that selected demographic characteristics and selected opinions of county supervisors are factors affecting the selection process. The selected demographic characteristics of the supervisors were: (1) age, (2) background, (3) education, (4) teaching experience, and (5) years of supervisory experience. The selected opinions of supervisors included their ranking of several factors of publications which were: (1) the general content, (2) the personal source, (3) the organizational source, and (4) the relative importance of a set of publications.

The population and sample of the study included all Maryland county supervisors of vocational agricultural programs and all Maryland vocational agriculture teachers. A total of 51 of the 68 vocational agriculture teachers and 17 of the 24 county supervisors were included in the study.

The personal sources and organizational sources of the study were selected from persons and organizations which normally serve, either directly or indirectly, as sources of information for vocational agriculture teachers. Each of nine personal sources, representing nine organizational sources, assisted in the selection and dissemination of one publication relevant to vocational agricultural programs. Each of the nine publications, published or procured by one of the organizational sources, was sent to county supervisors in sufficient quantities to allow the supervisor to disseminate one copy of each publication to each vocational agriculture teacher in that county. Copies of each organization's publication, along with a cover letter bearing the personal source's name, were mailed by each personal source to the supervisor. Three weeks were allowed for the dissemination of publications from supervisor to vocational agriculture teachers.

The instruments of the study included a check list for vocational agriculture teachers to indicate which publications had been disseminated by county supervisors, a rank order form for vocational agriculture teachers to indicate their ranking of the general content of publications, and a telephone interview schedule with county supervisors to obtain demographic data and determine their opinions regarding several factors concerning the publications.

Non-parametric statistics, including the Fisher exact probability test, the Spearman rank correlation coefficient,

The Kendall rank correlation coefficient, the Kendall partial rank correlation coefficient, and the Kendall coefficient of concordance, were used in the analysis of the data.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of demographic data revealed that the county supervisors in this study had a mean age of 50.53 years, a mean educational level of a master's degree plus 23 semester hours, and 10.53 years of vocational supervisory experience. Seven supervisors had above mean ages, while 10 were below the mean age. Ten supervisors had above the mean education while 7 had below the mean education. Six supervisors were above the mean and 11 were below the mean in years of vocational supervisory experience.

It was also found that: (1) 11 supervisors had farm backgrounds while 6 had non-farm backgrounds, (2) 5 supervisors had teaching experience in vocational agriculture while 12 had teaching experience in other areas, and (3) 13 supervisors had former vocational teaching experience while 4 had former teaching experience in other areas.

As was evidenced by exact probabilities ranging from .280 to .500, the county supervisors did not differ significantly in the extent of their dissemination of publications by the selected characteristics mentioned above.

Apparently supervisors were aware of what general types of information were needed by vocational agriculture teachers. A Spearman rho correlation coefficient of .904 between the supervisors' and vocational agriculture teachers'

ranking of the general content of publications was significant at the .01 level.

Another major finding of the study was that county supervisors tended not to disseminate the publications they felt would best meet the needs of vocational agriculture teachers. A negative correlation (-.179) was noted between the supervisors' ranking of publications and their extent of dissemination of publications. However, this was not significant at an acceptable level.

There were no significant relationships between the supervisors' rankings of: (1) the personal source and the organizational source of the publications, (2) the personal source and the relative importance of publications, or (3) the organizational source and the relative importance of publications.

Another finding was that the supervisors' ranking of the relative importance of publications correlated significantly (.05 level) with their ranking of the general content. Apparently supervisors base their opinions of a publication in part on the publications general content.

Seemingly, the supervisors do not differ significantly in their opinions regarding the personal source, the organizational source, the general content, and the relative importance of a set of publications by selected characteristics.

Another finding was related to the previous finding in that as a group the supervisors tended to agree on which publications best met the needs of vocational agriculture teachers,

which personal and organizational sources of publications were the best sources of information, and what general types of publications were needed by vocational agriculture teachers. Coefficients of concordance ranging from .189 to .569 were obtained for those factors of publications. All were significant beyond the .005 level. The coefficients of concordance would indicate that the supervisors tend to use the same criteria for ranking those factors. Only in the supervisors' extent of dissemination of publications was a tendency to agree not found.

The relationship between the supervisors' ranking of the personal source and the organizational source of a set of publications yielded a Kendall correlation coefficient of .257. When a Kendall partial correlation was determined for those rankings with the extent of a supervisors' dissemination of publications held constant, a coefficient of .256 was obtained. Apparently, the supervisors' ranking of the personal source and the organizational source are independent of his dissemination of publications.

No significant relationship was found between the supervisors' ranking of either the personal source or the organizational source of publications and the extent of their dissemination of publications. Kendall correlation coefficients of .029 and .088, respectively, were obtained for those relationships.

In addition, no significant relationship was found between supervisors' ranking of the general content and the

extent of their dissemination of publications. A Spearman correlation coefficient of -.196 was obtained for that relationship. Also, when that relationship was investigated in terms of the selected characteristics of supervisors, no significant correlations were obtained.

Other findings were that of the personal sources and organizational sources of publications, the county supervisors prefer state level sources to university level sources and university level sources to national level sources.

Both vocational agriculture teachers and county supervisors indicated that of the types of publications listed on the form for ranking general content, that new and changing program material and curriculum development material were needed most by vocational agriculture teachers.

Conclusions

The conclusions made were based on the analysis of data and must be limited to the population studied. The analysis supported the following hypotheses:

1. The opinions of county supervisors and vocational agriculture teachers regarding the general content of a set of publications are positively related.

2. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the general content and the relative importance of a set of publications are positively related.

With the exception of the supervisors' extent of dissemination of publications, the following hypothesis was supported:

1. The opinions among county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, the general content, and the relative importance of a set of publications, as well as the extent of dissemination of those publications, are related.

The following hypotheses were not supported:

1. The extent of the county supervisors' dissemination of publications to vocational agriculture teachers is directly related to selected characteristics of the supervisors.

2. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the relative importance of a set of publications are positively related to the extent of the supervisors' dissemination of those publications.

3. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, and the relative importance of a set of publications are positively related.

4. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source, the organizational source, the general content, and the relative importance of a set of publications are related to selected characteristics of the supervisors.

5. The opinions of county supervisors regarding the personal source and the organizational source of a set of publications are positively related when each supervisor disseminates the same quantity of each publication in the set.

Implications and Recommendations

This study was exploratory in nature in that it sought to determine what criteria county supervisors of vocational agricultural programs used in the selection and dissemination of publications to vocational agriculture teachers.

The major finding of this study was that while county supervisors were aware of the general types of publications needed by vocational agriculture teachers, the supervisors did not disseminate publications to meet those needs. It was also found that supervisors did not seem to disseminate publications on the basis of general content, personal source, or organizational source of publications. Nor did the supervisors' overall opinion regarding a publication seemingly influence their dissemination of publications. Implications are that factors other than those investigated in the study might provide the real basis for the supervisors' dissemination of publications.

Apparently the supervisors do act as gatekeepers in that they sent varying numbers of publications through the channel. Even so, the criteria which they used to disseminate those publications was not evidenced in the study. It was seemingly evident though that the criteria used by the supervisors varied.

As such, a follow-up study is needed to investigate other possible factors relating to the selection and dissemination process. Other studies are needed to investigate the

purposive communicator and the receiver for the channel in this study.

While the participants of this study were limited to county supervisors of agricultural programs and vocational agriculture teachers, the study has implications for other areas of vocational education.

Researchers and writers in agricultural education may find the rankings of the general content of publications by supervisors and vocational agriculture teachers of value for the development of future publications.

Recommendations for future studies would include:

1. Increasing the number of respondents studied.

2. Developing and validating a classification system for publications relevant to vocational agricultural programs.

3. Utilizing a jury panel to obtain cross-sections of organizational sources, personal sources, and publications relevant to vocational agricultural programs.

4. Disseminating publications to gatekeepers over a longer period of time using larger numbers of publications.

Additional gatekeeper studies are needed on similar populations in other states and other areas of the nation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FORM FOR VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS TO RANK THE GENERAL CONTENT OF A SET OF PUBLICATIONS

Number _____

FORM A

NAME _____ DATE _____

INSTRUCTIONS

Please rank the categories of resource material below from one to nine, according to which category of material is most needed by vocational agriculture or vocational horticulture teachers. Place a one (1) in the space provided beside the category most needed and continuing until a nine (9) is placed in the category least needed. Please return this form immediately.

_____A. Available Resource Materials

_____B. New and Changing Program Material

_____C. F.F.A. Related Material

_____D. Curriculum Development Material

_____E. Career Opportunity Material

_____F. Off-Farm Instructional Material

_____G. College Recruitment Material

_____H. Technical Agriculture Material

_____I. Research Findings Material

APPENDIX B

PUBLICATION IDENTIFICATION CHECKLIST FOR
VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Number _____

FORM B

NAME _____ DATE _____

INSTRUCTIONS

During the period May 20 through June 10, 1971, you will be receiving some, or all, of the publications listed by name below. Please indicate which of the publications you receive by placing an X in the space beside the name of the publication. Identify only those publications listed below which you receive during the time period indicated. Please return this completed form on June 10th, 1971. (This will allow sufficient time for you to receive all publications)

List of Publications

_____A. Popular Publications for the Farmer, Suburbanite, Homemaker, and Consumer.

_____B. Innovative Programs in Agricultural Education

_____C. Occupational Guidance for Off-Farm Agriculture

_____D. Advisors Teaching Guide on FFA

_____E. Opportunity, Challenge, and Reward: A Career Based on Agricultural and Resource Economics
(This publication is loose-leaf, and the title is found on second page following a cover letter)

_____F. Progress through Research: Survey of Agricultural Research in Maryland

_____G. 1971 Maryland Spray Calendar for Commercial Small Fruit Growers

_____H. Ornamental Horticulture Technology: Suggested Two-Year Post High School Curriculums

_____I. Agri Opportunities

APPENDIX C

COUNTY SUPERVISORS RANKING FORMS

COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH

Survey of Opinion

INSTRUCTIONS

Each page in the survey instrument will be taken in order. You may ask questions about any part of the survey you do not understand. Your answers will be recorded by the interviewer as each page is completed. Other instructions will be given by the interviewer. Please turn to the first page.

Form SA
Resource Materials

Instructions

Please rank the categories of resource material below from one to nine, according to which category of material is most needed by vocational agriculture or vocational horticulture teachers. Place a one (1) in the space provided beside the category most needed and continue until a nine (9) is placed in the category least needed.

_____ A. Available resource material

_____ B. New and changing program material

_____ C. Off-farm instructional material

_____ D. FFA-related material

_____ E. College recruitment material

_____ F. Research findings material

_____ G. Technical agriculture material

_____ H. Curriculum development material

_____ I. Career opportunity material

Form SB
Organizational Source

Instructions

Please rank the following organizations according to which is the best source of resource material to meet the needs of vocational agriculture or vocational horticulture teachers. Place a one (1) in the space provided by the best organizational source and continue until a nine (9) is placed by the least valuable organizational source.

_____ A. United States Department of Agriculture

_____ B. American Vocational Association

_____ C. Center for Research and Leadership Development in Vocational and Technical Education

_____ D. National FFA Center

_____ E. Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Maryland

_____ F. Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station

_____ G. Maryland Cooperative Extension Service

_____ H. United States Office of Education

_____ I. Division of Vocational and Technical Education, Maryland State Department of Education

Form SC
Personal Source

Instructions

Please rank the following persons according to which person is the best source of resource materials to meet the needs of vocational agriculture or vocational horticulture teachers. Place a one (1) in the space provided by the best personal source and continue until a nine (9) is placed by the least valuable personal source.

_____ A. Frank A. Caflisch, Chief, Utilization and Inquiries Branch, Publications Division, Office of Information, United States Department of Agriculture

_____ B. Lowell A. Burkett, Executive Director, American Vocational Association

_____ C. Melvin Garner, Assistant Director, Office of Program Administration, Division of Vocational-Technical Education, Maryland State Department of Education

_____ D. William Paul Grey, National FFA Executive Secretary, National FFA Center

_____ E. Clifford Nelson, Teacher Educator of Agricultural Education, University of Maryland

_____ F. I. C. Haut, Director, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Maryland

_____ G. Elwyn E. Deal, Assistant Director, Agricultural Programs, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Maryland

_____ H. H. N. Hunsicker, Program Officer, Agri-Business and Natural Resources Occupations, United States Office of Education

_____ I. Glenn W. Lewis, Specialist in Agriculture, Division of Vocational and Technical Education, Maryland State Department of Education

Form SD
Vocational Publications

Instructions

Please rank the publications enclosed in envelope number two according to which best meets the needs of Vocational Agriculture or Horticulture teachers. Place a one (1) in the space provided by the best publication and continue until a nine (9) is placed by the least valuable publication.

_____ A. Popular Publications for the Farmer, Suburbanite, Homemaker, and Consumer

_____ B. Innovative Programs in Agricultural Education

_____ C. Occupational Guidance for Off-Farm Agriculture

_____ D. Advisors Teaching Guide on FFA

_____ E. Opportunity, Challenge, and Reward: A Career Based on Agricultural and Resource Economics
(This publication is loose-leaf, and the title is found on second page following a cover letter.)

_____ F. Progress through Research: Survey of Agricultural Research in Maryland

_____ G. 1971 Maryland Spray Calendar for Commercial Small Fruit Growers

_____ H. Ornamental Horticulture Technology: Suggested Two-Year Post High School Curriculums

_____ I. Agri Opportunities

APPENDIX D
PUBLICATION TRANSMITTAL LETTERS

american vocational association inc 1510 h street nw washington d c 20005 (202) 737-3722

May 17, 1971

Dear Agricultural and Related Vocational Supervisors:

The American Vocational Association is making limited quantities of the publication, Innovative Programs in Agricultural Education, available to Maryland Vocational Agriculture teachers The publication contains descriptions of programs that are developmental in nature, innovative and oriented to quality in meeting present and future needs in agricultural and related vocational education.

Additional copies may be obtained through the American Vocational Association, 1510 H Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., 20005. Prices of additional copies are 35¢ per copy with a 10% discount on orders of more than ten.

Sincerely yours,

Lowell A. Burkett

Lowell A. Burkett

lowell a burkett
executive director

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

May 20, 1971

To: Supervisor of Agricultural Education

From: Frank A. Caflisch
Chief, Utilization & Inquiries Branch
Publications Division, Office of Information

Subject: USDA Resource Material

The USDA periodically revises its publications and issues new ones to better meet the needs of the people it serves. In order to make you and your vocational agriculture teachers aware of changes in publications, we are sending you copies of the recently revised listing of popular publications.

Hopefully, your vo-ag teachers will find "Popular Publications for the Farmer, Suburbanite, Homemaker, Consumer" useful in their programs.

Frank A. Caflisch

JAMES A. SENSENBAUGH
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
600 WYNDHURST AVENUE, BALTIMORE 21210

May 18, 1971

Dear Vocational Supervisor:

I am forwarding copies of the publication, Occupational Guidance for Off-Farm Agriculture, published by The Center for Research and Leadership Development in Vocational and Technical Education located at The Ohio State University.

You may find these of value for Vocational Agriculture teachers in your county.

Sincerely,

Melvin Garner
Assistant Director
Office of Program Administration
Division of Vocational-Technical Education

G:vls

Future Farmers of America 119
The National Organization for Students of Vocational Agriculture

In Cooperation With
OFFICE OF EDUCATION, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

National Executive Secretary

Reply to:
National FFA Center
Alexandria, Va. 22309
Phone: 703 - 360-3600

May 19, 1971

Dear Supervisor of Agriculture:

The National FFA Center is making the recently revised publication, Advisor's Teaching Guide on FFA, available to local vocational agriculture teachers. Enclosed are sufficient copies for the teachers in your county.

If you need more copies of this publication, or if I can be of further service, please contact me.

Sincerely,

William Paul Gray
National FFA Executive Secretary
National FFA Center
Alexandria, Virginia

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

College of Agriculture
College Park

May 18, 1971

Dear Vo-Ag Supervisor:

The Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Maryland is making the publication, Opportunity, Challenge, and Reward: A Career Based on Agricultural and Resource Economics available to vocational agriculture teachers.

Enclosed are sufficient copies for the vocational agriculture teachers in your county.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Clifford Nelson
Teacher Trainer of Agricultural Education
University of Maryland

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
COLLEGE PARK

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

May 17, 1971

Dear Supervisor:

Enclosed are copies of the Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin A-164, which you may wish to forward to Vocational Agriculture teachers.

Progress through Research: Survey of Agricultural Research in Maryland is an annual report of research carried on by the Agricultural Experiment Station in Maryland.

Sincerely,

I. C. Haut
Director, Agricultural Experiment Station
University of Maryland

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

122

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
College Park, Maryland 20742

Office of the Director

May 17, 1971

TO: Vocational Agricultural Supervisors and Coordinators

Bulletin #272, "Maryland Spray Calendar for Commercial Fruit Growers", has been released for distribution by the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service.

Enclosed are copies which may be of benefit to Vocational Agricultural instructors.

Sincerely yours,

Elwyn E. Deal
Assistant Director
Agricultural Programs

mw
Enclosures

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND — LOCAL GOVERNMENTS — U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

May 18, 1971

Dear Supervisors of Vocational Agriculture:

The field of agriculture is constantly expanding, bringing new areas of study into focus. The rapidly growing field of Horticulture represents a wealth of opportunity for the student of agriculture. In order to assist your Vo-Ag teachers in this area, we are sending you copies of the publication, Ornamental Horticulture Technology.

The publication was developed by the Office of Education as a guide for two-year, post high school curriculums. Much of the material included applies to the secondary as well as the post secondary level. Hopefully, this will benefit your vocational programs.

Sincerely,

H. N. Hunsicker

H. N. Hunsicker
Program Officer
Agri-Business and
Natural Resources Occupations

Enclosure

JAMES A. SENSENBAUGH
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
600 WYNDHURST AVENUE, BALTIMORE 21210

May 13, 1971

Dear Vocational Agriculture Supervisor:

Opportunities afforded to young people in the area of agriculture business are numerous. To assist Vocational Agriculture teachers in making students aware of these opportunities, I am enclosing the publication, Agri-opportunities.

This publication is made available by the Division of Vocational and Technical Education.

I am sure you will find it useful to teachers in your county.

Sincerely,

Glenn W. Lewis

Glenn W. Lewis
Specialist in Agriculture

GWL:vls

APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND
EXTENSION EDUCATION

COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND 20742
PHONE: (301) 454-3738

(FIRST LETTER TO TEACHERS)

May 21, 1971

Dear Vocational Agricultural or Horticultural Teacher:

This letter is written to request your participation in a research study being conducted by the Department of Agricultural and Extention Education at the University of Maryland. The study concerns the dissemination of publications to vocational agricultural and horticultural teachers.

Please fill out the two forms and return in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelopes on the date indicated on each form. Instructions are included on each form.

Your participation in this study will be of value in determining what types of publications are needed by vocational agricultural and vocational horticultural teachers. Please do not discuss this study. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Boyd F. Robinson, Jr.
Graduate Assistant

Dr. Clifford Nelson
Associate Professor

(FOLLOW-UP POST CARD TO TEACHERS)

June 9, 1971

Dear Vocational Agriculture Teacher:

Several days ago a request for your participation in a research study was made. If your busy schedule has not permitted you to complete the questionnaire, I would appreciate your taking a few moments to do so.

I would also take this opportunity to thank those of you who sent in returns and to remind you that Form B of that questionnaire should be returned on June 10, 1971 or as soon as possible after that date.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

APPENDIX F

JAMES A. SENSENBAUGH
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

(LETTER TO SUPERVISORS)

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

600 WYNDHURST AVENUE, BALTIMORE 21210

June 14, 1971

Dear Supervisors of Vocational Agriculture:

This letter is written to solicit your cooperation and participation in a Master's research study being conducted in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at the University of Maryland. The research concerns the dissemination of vocationally oriented publications to vocational agriculture teachers. The purpose of the research is to determine what types of publications are needed and desired at the local level. The study will involve a determination of your opinion regarding what types of publications are needed by vocational agriculture teachers.

Your participation in the study would involve one telephone interview with the researcher, Mr. Boyd Robinson, a graduate assistant in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education.

Enclosed is a self-addressed card which you may return to Mr. Robinson indicating your willingness to participate in the study. You will be receiving a package of material to be used in the study shortly. This package will be marked Personal and will also be labeled "Research Study Material" -- DO NOT OPEN UNTIL CONTACTED BY RESEARCHER. The interview period will be during the week of June 21-25

As professional communications studies in the field of vocational education are limited in number and as you occupy a key position in vocational education, we urge your participation in this important study.

Sincerely yours,

Glenn W. Lewis
Specialist in Agriculture
Division of Vocational and Technical Education
Maryland State Department of Education

Melvin Garner
Assistant Director
Office of Program Administration
Division of Vocational-Technical Education
Maryland State Department of Education

jbc

(SUPERVISOR RETURN POST CARD)

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH RETURN CARD

☐ Yes, I will participate in the research study.

☐ No, I will be unable to participate.

Time To Be Contacted

☐ Any time during office hours of the week, June 21-25.

☐ If you prefer a specific time, please indicate below:

Date_____ Time_____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Comments:

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